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BEADLE'S DIME NOVELS



GRAYBEARD, THE SORCERER.

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GRAYBEARD, THE SORCERER;

OR,

THE RECLUSE OF MONT ROYALE.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK,
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BY J. B. BEADLE.

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GRAYBEARD, THE SORCERER.

CHAPTER I.

THE RECLUSE OF MONT ROYALE

A SOLITARY figure stood upon a hight, now Mont Royale, overlooking the city of Montreal, as it stood in the early colonial days. Montreal of the past was not the city of the present, a thriving mart of commerce, with its shipping at the wharves, its towering spires, and long lines of business edifices and dwellings, but a small yet growing village, standing upon the lower point of the island which is now one vast city. The dwellings were mostly of the humbler sort, with white-washed walls gleaming in the sunshine, and with the quaint gables and peaked roofs copied from the French cottages of that early day. Mont Royale was covered with a thick growth of timber upon its sides, but the summit was bare, and it was upon this point that the man stood.

He was one past the middle age, and though plainly dressed, showed in his face and manner that he had not sprung from the poorer class. His figure was erect and stately, and his face, though seamed by lines which many cares and sorrows had imprinted there, was still a man of power among his fellows. His hair was dark, slightly touched with silver, and curling about his temples in thick masses. His dress was of sober brown, with knee-breeches, white stockings and the conical hat of the period. The belt about his waist was of black leather, with a silver buckle, supporting a long rapier of the most approved make, upon the hilt of which a white, patrician hand unconsciously lingered as he looked down upon the city at his feet with a strange, fixed, intent gaze.

"Lie there, Montreal," he muttered. "Bask in your supposed safety, and keep within your walls your infamous robbers and traitors. But, beware of me, for my day of vengeance will surely come. I wish Chastellar would appear."

He sat down upon a loose boulder of gray stone, with his eyes still fixed upon the distant city, and as he looked, a mournful light shewed itself in his firm, set face.

"Who would have said, when I was in the zenith of my power, fifteen short years ago, that I should be an outcast and a wanderer, homeless, hopeless, with a blot upon my name? I, who never dreamed of wrong—I, whose only thought was to build up in this wilderness a nation which should be the refuge for all mankind, oppressed by the strong hand of power! It drives me mad to think of it! Ha; who comes now?"

He sprung to his feet, and quick as thought buried himself in the depths of the undergrowth about the crest of the mountain. Directly after he heard the sound of voices, musical laughter, and the deep tones of a man's voice, and there appeared upon the platform which he had just left a lady and a French officer, who stopped to get breath after the ascent. They had come up the mountain from the southern side, and had nearly taken the lonely man unawares. But, his ears, trained to catch the slightest sound, had heard even the light step of the girl, and he now lay hidden in the bushes, resting upon one knee, gazing at them from the cover with a face which seemed to have been suddenly transfigured. His eyes were fixed upon the girl, with an expression of adoring admiration which could only proceed from perfect love. And indeed, she was well worthy of it.

Picture to yourself a patrician face, cut in perfect outlines, with a complexion of marvelous delicacy, ripe, red lips, a little full, eyes of heaven's own azure, and a profusion of shining brown hair blowing free in the breeze of the mountain; a perfect figure moving with a willowy grace peculiar to some women and only to a chosen few, and you have some idea of this girl as she appeared to the eager watcher. She was richly dressed, and was evidently of the higher order, and had the ease and grace of motion which only the best education and society can bestow. She held a staff in one hand, with which she had assisted her steps up the slope, and, in the other, swung by the strings a jaunty riding-hat, with a pure white feather wreathed about the crown.

Her companion was a man nearly forty years of age, also

of her order, wearing the uniform of a lieutenant colonel of foot, one of the most showy uniforms in the world. As handsome as Apollo, with a dark face, flashing black eyes and hair of the same color. Upon the first glance he had a very pleasant face, but, looking at him closer, there was something in the eyes, and about the lips which was not so pleasant. He seemed to have a love of display in dress, for his sword-hilt was of chased gold, of great value, in which flashed a ruby of fabulous price. His hat was looped up with a large diamond, and he showed more gold lace and bullion than even the uniform of his regiment allowed. Tall and strong, with the limbs and shoulders of a Hercules, he looked an invincible antagonist to meet in a battle.

"You have not deceived me, Colonel Lefebre, when you said that this view was magnificent, and would repay the trouble of the ascent," said the lady, in a mellow voice. "It is surpassingly fine."

Those who have stood upon the slopes of Mont Royale, looking toward Montreal, can well indorse this encomium. The fertile plains are there yet, but the miles upon miles of waving pines, the changing scenery of verdure, are there no longer. The whole island upon which the city stood was in full view; the two branches of the river, joining again just below the city, and the frowning fortress with the sentries on the ramparts, are changed in our day. The lady stood, with rapt gaze upon the beautiful scene, while the officer evidently enjoyed her surprise and pleasure.

"I hoped that you would like it, Mademoiselle Lavalle," he said. "You know that I would do any thing to give you pleasure."

"*Merci, mon colonel!*" she said, with a mocking courtesy. "Do not compliment me, but your own good taste, which has led you to show me this grand scenery. I wonder if the day will come when we shall see a great city where Montreal now stands. Frenchmen build great hopes upon the future of this colony, but they may come to naught."

"Never! The future of Canada is assured, at least in my eyes. Year by year you will see our strength increase, until we are a vast nation including all the land which lies to the south between this and the Spanish colonies. But, I had

something to say to you--another object than the scenery--when I brought you to this place."

"But I will listen to nothing else," cried Mademoiselle Lavalle. "How dare you change a subject until I give you leave?"

"But you must hear me, mademoiselle. No, not that cold name, Coralie; I will call you by *that* name. You know that I love you, and that you have given me hope."

Her face began to cloud at this.

"Colonel Lefebre, you are a man of honor, high in power, and in the good will of the Governor of this province, and you have been a friend to me. But, if you design to take advantage of my rashness in giving you this opportunity, you will find yourself mistaken in your estimate of my powers of resistance. I think it will be well for us to return."

"Not yet, I beg you," he said. "I do not wish to offend you, and my passion may have led me astray, but, I love you dearly, and would give my life for your sake."

"I have a mission to perform, and, until that mission is accomplished, I will not listen to words of love from any man. I am one without a name, and until the time comes when I have a father to give me his name, to give my hand to the man who loves me, I shall never marry."

The colonel looked at her in wild amazement, as at one who saw a vision. His hands clenched and unclenched themselves in a spasmodic way, and he bit his lips until the blood started.

"Destruction!" he muttered. "Will my own act recoil upon me? Can the grave give up its dead, and her father rise out of it to give his daughter to me? Mademoiselle," he continued, raising his voice, "you do yourself and me a great wrong. Have you any reason to know that your father lives, or who he is?"

"My heart tells me that he lives, and that I shall discover him, and regain a name which is mine by right."

"Monsieur Lavalle is an honest gentleman, and loves you like a daughter. He has given you his name, and when he dies you will receive his fortune. What more can you desire?"

"To know who and what I am! The man I can love will

be a man of honor, and I can not consent to blot the name of such a man by giving him a hand which may be linked with dishonor. Let this suffice, and say no more about it, Monsieur Colonel. I esteem you highly, but, until the purpose of my life is accomplished, I can not consent to give you any hope. You have been kind to me, have honored me in your choice, and it is better for you to know that there is little hope."

" You pursue a hopeless chimera, Coralie. You cast aside the love of a man who adores you for a dream which may never be realized. You know nothing of your parentage, and the only man who could have spoken is now in his grave, the old soldier in whose care Lavalle found you. How then *can* you hope to find your parents?"

" It may be a task of years, but I shall succeed in the end."

He struck his hand angrily upon his sword-hilt, and his face darkened visibly, but, as she looked at him quickly, it cleared again, and he assumed a look of extreme humility. As they stood in this attitude, a shambling step was heard, the bushes parted, and a strange figure came out upon the crest of the mountain—an old, bent, decrepit man, whose white hair hung low upon his breast, and who walked with difficulty, leaning upon a staff. He was so bent as to be almost a hunchback, and stood with both hands clasping the staff looking fixedly at the pair.

" The dove and the vulture in company," he cried, in a shrill, cracked voice. " Leave him, fair lady, lest a great evil come to you."

" Who is this?" said Coralie, recoiling in surprise. " From whence did he come?"

" A madman, whom men call the Recluse of the Mountain," said the colonel. " Here, old dotard, how dare you interrupt me?"

" Silence!" shrieked the old man, striking the earth with his staff. " In the name of the past, which is a book you do not care to read, I command you to be silent."

" What do *you* know of the past, old wretch?" replied the colonel. " Back to your den among the rocks before a worse thing happen to you!"

"Colonel Lefebre," said Coralie, quickly, "I do not understand you. Surely you can not mean to threaten an old man, whom you say is mad."

"He insults me, and only harsh measures will avail with him," replied Lefebre. "I beg your pardon, but I have heard that he has used my name before."

"*You ask me what I know of the past?*" cried the Recluse. "Shall I open the book of fate and read the past to you, Colonel Lefebre? Shall I tell of the tragedy at Quebec, of the forged letters, of the infamy by which a noble man was sacrificed? *Do you ask me to speak of all this?*"

Lefebre turned ghastly pale and staggered like a drunken man, his eyes dilated, and his breath coming in quick gasps through his closed lips. Coralie looked at him in astonishment, and the old man laughed in demoniac glee.

"The time is not yet, Victor Lefebre," he said. "I have looked into the book of fate, and it says that you are to enjoy the wages of sin for a season, but not long. When the time comes, when the cup of happiness is dashed from your lips by a hand which has been dust for years, when the dead come out of their graves to witness against you, think of the Recluse of Mont Royale, and remember his words!"

He turned and seemed about to leave them, but came hobbling back, and addressed himself to Coralie.

"Men say that I am mad, lady," he said. "Perhaps I am, but there is method in my madness yet. That man knows it, for you see his small soul shrink and tremble at my words. Beware of him! Think my voice the voice of the one whom you seek, and respect my warning. This man's heart is black with many crimes, although he cloaks it under a subtle mask. When he seems to speak the truth, he lies the most foully."

"You can not blame me now, Coralie," gasped Lefebre. "Die, old villain, and croak your calumnies in the lowest pit."

His sword was out as he spoke, and the next moment was thrust straight at the heart of the Recluse, while Coralie uttered a shriek of terror. But, the old man stood leaning on his staff, with his face unmoved and stern, looking at the would-be assassin, while Lefebre stood appalled before him, holding in his hand the remains of his fine Toledo blade, shivered to the hilt!

"Away!" cried the Recluse. "You have no power to harm me, villain, and I will be an avenging fate, to follow you until the end shall come. Go!"

"If the sword has failed me, this shall not," cried Lefebre, snatching a pistol from his belt. "Down on your knees and beg for mercy."

Quick as thought the old man lifted his staff and it fell upon the arm of the colonel just above the elbow—a scientific blow, delivered with the force and address hardly to be looked for in one so old, and the arm of Lefebre fell nerveless to his side, while the pistol dropped to the earth. Before he could draw another weapon Coralie glided between him and the object of his wrath, facing the colonel boldly.

"You are showing yourself in a new light to me, Colonel Lefebre. I at least thought you a man of honor, but no such man will assail one so old as this with deadly weapons. I order you to cease."

"Fear nothing for me, lady," said the Recluse. "It is not in this man's power to harm me."

"You shall see," hissed the colonel. "For the present you are safe, but a time will come when you shall know who has the power, you or I. Mademoiselle Lavalle, do you return under my escort?"

"Go with him," said the Recluse. "Watchful eyes shall be upon him at every step he takes, and he shall not offer you an injury. You shall hear from me again, and soon."

He turned and hobbled quickly into the bushes, never turning his head to look back.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECRET SPY.

WHILE Coralie Lavalle and the colonel were returning in silence toward the place where they had landed, the Recluse was making his way slowly among the rocks which were plentifully strewn about the summit, until he reached a shel-

tered spot in the woods, where a sort of hillock of a broken ledge cropped out of the surrounding surface. Here he paused, and struck three times upon a stone, and waited. A moment after a dark face appeared at one of the numerous fissures—a face so fierce and relentless in its expression that it might well have appalled the stoutest heart. This being drew himself slowly out of the rift in the hill and revealed a Herculean figure, clad in untanned deer-skin, his head uncovered, and a huge club in his right hand. The face was very dark, but not exactly the face of a negro; rather one of the northern tribes of Africa, perhaps a Moor.

“I have seen him again, Abah,” said the Recluse. “The villain and myself stood face to face and I did not kill him. I could not while he holds the secret I would know.”

The Moor shook his head slowly from side to side; a deep scar which crossed his face from the left corner of his mouth to the right eye grew livid along its entire length; he struck the rock fiercely with his club.

“Remember that you must control yourself, Abah, if by chance you should meet him alone. Remember, that if he dies without confession all my years of labor will have been in vain.”

Abah placed his finger upon the livid scar and traced it throughout its entire length, looking at the Recluse inquiringly.

“I see it, Abah, and I know who gave you that mark, and that you will not forget nor forgive. But, for my sake, do not take vengeance for your wrongs until I have wrung the secret from him. Do you promise?”

Abah took the hand of the old man and laid it upon his breast, pressing it warmly.

“I understand you, good and true friend. You promise that your private revenges shall sleep until I have done my work. On my part I promise that he shall not die by my hand!”

A ferocious joy gleamed in the swarthy face as Abah lifted his eyes and hands toward heaven in a solemn and impressive gesture.

“Has Chastellar been here?” demanded the Recluse.

The Moor shook his head, and, even as he did so, a signal-whistle sounded from the woods and the Recluse started.

"There he is now. Give the answer, Abah."

The Moor lifted his hand to his mouth and gave utterance to a strange cry, which rung wildly through the forest. The whistle was repeated near at hand, and evidently approaching.

"Go out and meet him, Abah," said the Recluse, "and bring him to me."

As he spoke he stepped into the fissure and was out of sight. The Moor, picking up his club, strode away through the forest in the direction of the approaching person, whoever it might be. After a while he sat down upon a stone and waited, giving his signal from time to time. Soon after he was joined by a young man in a hunting-dress of green cloth, carrying, besides his sword and pistols, a short but beautifully finished rifle of polished steel, which was slung upon his back. He had a bold, manly face, strong and true, full of earnest purpose, and was a compact mass of thews and sinews.

"Ha, old Abah," he cried. "There you are! What new mischief have you and your master cooked up for me to perform?"

The Moor smiled, a smile which made his dark face more demoniac than ever, and, taking the hand of the speaker he laid it on his head.

"That means that you are glad to see me, old man? Very well; in default of a better way of expressing yourself, perhaps it will do. Where is your master?"

The Moor pointed in the direction from which he had come.

"I don't know how it will end with me," said the young man, signing to the Moor to lead the way, "but, my life has been full of desperate chances and I will not hesitate now. Chastellar, the outlaw, is not Louis Chastellar, captain of Musketeers, and he must do any work which falls to his share."

The Moor led the way in silence, and reached the tumbled mass of rocks from which he had first appeared. He entered the fissure and the young man followed him without question, although he had never penetrated to this dark den before. The course they took was through a low path among the rocks, which soon became shrouded in darkness, and Abah took his hand to guide him. Crouching low, to guard their heads from the jagged rocks which hung dangerously near

them, they kept on by a crooked way until the faint glimmer of a light was seen in front, and they came into a small irregular cave lighted by a lamp which hung from a wooden bar fixed into the rocks. A couple of rude beds occupied two of the corners, and in the center of the cave was a brazier filled with glowing wood, over which a small kettle was boiling. The Recluse was seated upon a rock, waiting for them.

"You have come then, Chastellar," he said in a sad tone. "I began to fear that some evil had befallen you, for I did not think Louis Chastellar the man to desert a friend as unfortunate as himself."

"You judged me rightly, by heaven, De Lambert," said Chastellar. "Pah! How can you stay in such a hole as this, when you have the free woods outside. By our lady, they did me a service, when they drove me out of Montreal, for a crime of which I was innocent. I never was so happy as I am now, knowing that these men fear me, and that the sound of my name will bring the garrison of Montreal to arms as quickly as the war-cry of the Iroquois. They fear me now; I warned them."

"You know to whom you are indebted for the indignity put upon you, do you not, Louis Chastellar?"

"Know him! Let me once get him at my sword's length and he shall know what it is to make an enemy of me! Look you, De Lambert; I trusted that man in every thing. I would have trusted him with my life—with my soul. He seemed to me an open, honorable man, to whom a bad action would have been a thing impossible. That was my conception of Victor Lefebre."

"I have seen the time when I would have said the same, but, like you, my eyes have been opened to his baseness only by my ruin. Do you know that I saw him to day—yes, stood face to face with him for full ten minutes?"

"And you did not strike him dead at your feet?"

"I dared not. He holds the secret I must know before he dies."

"Yes, yes; he can not die yet. Oh, my good, kind, considerate friend, when that is known, how small your chances of life! What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to go to Montreal upon an errand."

"Umph; it is risky."

"You shall have a disguise which no one can penetrate. I proved the temper of the scoundrel's blade to-day, for he struck at my breast and the steel shivered in his hand."

"Ha; then Abah has not deceived you about the protection? I think I will try his skill myself, for a sword point may get within my guard one of these days in spite of my skill in fencing. I—"

Just then a wild cry was heard, and Abah dashed into the cavern holding by the waist a diminutive, weazen-faced Frenchman, whose small countenance expressed the utmost terror. They knew him in a moment as a sly, treacherous scoundrel, who did the spying of Lefebre. His name was Antoine Castor.

"Ha," cried Louis, starting to his feet. "You black-hearted dog, do you know that you have sealed your own fate by spying upon me? Away with him, Abah! You know what to do."

"Oh, *mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" screamed the spy. "You do not, can not mean to give me up to this black devil? Have mercy upon an innocent man!"

"Innocent! By heaven if you dare profane the name of innocence again you are no better than a dead man."

The wretch was on his knees, groveling like a snake, and crawling to clasp the knees of the young outlaw, who regarded him sternly.

"Oh, Monsieur Louis—ah, Monsieur the Recluse, have mercy upon an unfortunate man and save me from this black demon! I was forced to do it, Monsieur Louis—I was, indeed."

"You know me then," said Louis, knitting his brows. "Sir, do you think we dare take the great risk of allowing this man to live?"

"I am afraid not," replied the Recluse. "Since he has forced himself unbidden upon our privacy, he must bear the penalty of his presumption. Abah will attend to him."

"Wait! In the name of the holy Virgin, wait. I can make myself useful to you if you will spare my life. I know my master's secrets and I will know more. Spare me, and I

will only live as a spy upon him, do your bidding in all things, work for your interests rather than my own. Send that black man away. *Diables!* How he grins at me."

"Stand aside for a moment, Abah," said the Recluse, solemnly. "I think we may bind this man to our interests so closely that he dare not betray us. Now, Antoine, let me recall a certain thing to your memory. Three years ago, you were in Quebec and a man was killed upon Point Levi, on the night of June 12th 1754. Do you happen to know who killed him?"

"I? I know nothing of this which you speak, monsieur."

"How very lucky for you. Fortunately I can throw some light upon this little matter and I will do so. This man had been sent from Chambly to Montreal and from thence to Quebec, with a paper in his possession necessary to save Captain Louis Chastellar from disgrace. It was not the cue of your master to allow Louis to escape, and he sent a man who killed the messenger, and the paper disappeared. Do you wish me to tell the name of the man who killed the messenger?"

"No, no; spare me!"

"Do you know where that paper is now?" cried Chastellar eagerly.

"I think I could find it," stammered the poor wretch. "I would try hard."

"You may have the opportunity. Transfer your service from Colonel Lefebre to me, and you shall never have reason to repent it. Labor for my interests as zealously as you have always done in those of my enemy and I shall have no reason to complain of you. But hesitate, dare to show by a word or act that you think of rebellion, and that moment you are doomed, past all redemption. Do you promise to join me?"

"I promise. What am I to do?"

"You are to go back to Montreal and remain in the service of the colonel. You can act for us far better there than if you remain with us outside. Your first act will be to possess yourself of the paper which will prove my innocence, and bring it to me."

"I will do it."

"And remember one thing. Watchful eyes are on you,

move where you will. The least token of yielding on your part will be the signal for your destruction. If at any time you see the sign of two crossed daggers placed before you, be sure that we are displeased with you and that danger is very near."

"I shall be careful."

"You will do well. Once before death has been very near you, when you knew it not. It will follow you close if you do not beware."

"I will be very careful."

"In the day when you are slack, look for Abah to come to you!"

"I shall not give him occasion," replied the other, casting a terrified glance at the gigantic figure of Abah, as he leaned against the wall. "Give me my instructions and let me go, and if I do not your will in all things, I shall deserve a visit from you."

"Agreed. You may go as soon as you like. Of course Lefebre sent you here."

"Yes; he told me to follow the Recluse and find where he lurked, and—"

"Murder me if you got the chance."

"Ah, no, surely."

"Antoine," said the Recluse, quietly, "you have a certain respect for me, but you are far from fathoming me yet. Come here."

Antoine approached him in a cringing manner, abject humility upon his face. The Recluse took up two small pieces of wood, about the size of chisel handles, which seemed to be connected with a strangely shaped box at his feet. The Recluse set his foot upon a small wheel and began to turn it slowly, and then more rapidly, by means of a contrivance like a foot-lathe. Spasmodic contractions began to show themselves in the face of Antoine, his arms began to twitch, and short yells of surprise and agony broke from his lips. The perspiration started from every pore, and he danced wildly about, utterly unable to drop the sticks.

"Oh, murder, *mille diables!* *Sacre bleu!* Help; release me, if you have any manhood in your bosom. Release me, or by the saints I perish where I stand. Oh! ha! ha! ha—he! Oh!"

There was a slight movement of the foot of the old man, and Antoine dropped the handles, looking askance at the dangerous instrument, of which he had no conception. The Recluse sat with that unchanging smile upon his face.

"Do not go yet. You must see another exhibition of my power. Abah, come here."

The Moor came forward, and brought out a little stool elevated upon three glass legs, and took one of the handles in his hand, and the wheel again began to turn, while Antoine looked on curiously, expecting to see the same contortions upon the part of the Moor as those which had so surprised him. But Abah made no sign except this: his long elf locks began to rise and separate, and a strange crackling sound proceeded from it. Abah dropped the handle and turned toward Antoine. "Strike him," whispered Louis, who was watching the proceedings with a keen relish. Abah raised his hand and struck the spy a slight blow upon the nose. Instantly the sparks flew from the proboscis of the terrified Frenchman, and he rolled upon the earth, uttering cries of the wildest terror.

"That will do," said the Recluse, quietly. "He will not trouble us again soon by coming to this place. Abah, show him out."

"Don't let him touch me," screamed Antoine. "The devil is in this place, I believe from my soul."

He darted out of the cave, followed more slowly by Abah, while the Recluse and Louis sat looking at each other with amused faces.

"Yes, Louis," said the Recluse. "We have done a good work. This man dare not act against us, for his life is in danger. Fear not; we shall be sure to triumph in the end."

CHAPTER III.

CORALIE'S CHILDHOOD.

COLONEL LEFEBRE, upon reaching the place where he had left Antoine, had sent that worthy as a spy upon the Recluse, and had then returned to Montreal, his heart full of evil passions. Coralie walked by his side in silence, a sad expression upon her beautiful face. She had trusted in this man, had believed him a pattern of honor, and her idol had been suddenly and rudely shattered. The implied threats upon the part of the Recluse, the evident fear which the colonel had of the strange hermit, had made her doubt him ; and his assault upon a gray-haired man had destroyed her faith in him. They reached the river, where the colonel signaled for a bateau, and while they waited he turned to Coralie :

" You hate me, now," he said, in a mournful tone ; " but if you only knew how much cause that old fiend has given me to hate him you might not blame me so much."

" Nothing can excuse your murderous assault upon a man so old, Colonel Lefebre. How he was preserved I do not know, but it must be that the good God watches over the unsuspecting and innocent and saves them from danger. You had murder in your heart when you struck him."

" He angered me beyond endurance," he muttered, savagely.

" As there is a limit to human patience, so also there is a point beyond which neither passion nor prejudice should be suffered to betray us. Enough of this ; you will understand that we can not be friends after what has happened, and you are not to address me upon intimate terms as heretofore. In society we must be the same, but in our private walks and conversations there must be a change."

" You cast me off then, upon the unsubstantiated statements and accusations of an imbecile old man ?"

" You have proved that his charges are not without foundation, sir. Let us say no more, for the bateau is here."

A large flat-bottomed boat, propelled by four stout boatmen, was shooting up the stream and had almost reached them.

"I must speak," he said, lowering his voice. "This is not the end of my suit to you, although you may think so. I am not a man easily baffled, and you shall find it so."

Coralie stepped forward as the bateau swept up to the bank. A light canoe which was towing astern was now cast off, and the colonel motioned her to take her place in it.

"I prefer to stay in the large boat," she said, stepping on board. "It is by far the safer of the two."

Lefebre immediately signaled to the man in the stern sheets of the bateau to take the canoe, and followed her without a word. The boatmen saw that his face was gloomy and took their measures accordingly. They knew that the colonel when angry could punish the slightest breach of discipline severely, and they waited for orders.

"Push her off, men," he said, hoarsely. "Why are you wasting time?"

The bateau swung away from the shore, and the oars dropped together into the water. The boatmen set up a rowing song, for which the Canadian voyageurs are so famous, but the colonel stopped them fiercely:

"Silence, men," he cried. "Do you suppose we wish to be deafened by your howling?"

The song immediately ceased. The boat quickly rounded the spur of the mountain which lay in their way. The party then disembarked, and Coralie was assisted to her saddle, for horses stood waiting upon the bank.

"Listen to me," he said, hoarsely. "I beg your pardon for what I have done."

"I am not the one injured," she said, "although it is hard to lose faith in one I have trusted as I have trusted you. Your own conscience must convict you of a great sin."

"I acknowledge it, Coralie, and repent deeply that I suffered my feelings to lead me astray. Say that I have not completely lost your esteem, and that I may visit you."

"As a friend of my reputed father you will always be welcome at my home," she answered, quietly, "but not upon the same terms as before."

He sprung into the saddle and they rode side by side into the growing city. The guards presented arms to the colonel, the citizens touched their caps, and various acts showed that he was a man whom it was thought best to conciliate in every way. They rode rapidly through the long lines of white houses and stopped in front of a stone building more pretentious than the rest, built of brown stone after the fashion of the French villas of that day. Coralie dismounted without assistance and a bare-legged boy ran out to take her horse.

"Am I to come in?" whispered the colonel.

"As you like, sir; but I would not advise it at present," she answered, coldly.

The colonel touched his cap with a grim smile, and rode rapidly away and Coralie entered the house. She threw aside her hat in the hall and stepped into a room on the right of the great hall, where a white-haired man sat writing.

This was Monsieur Gabriele Lavalle, the reputed father of Coralie, a man of wealth and influence, and famous for charity and good deeds.

"Ah, my dear," he said, looking up. "Have you returned so soon? I hope you enjoyed your ride."

"The scenery is very fine from the mountain, father," she said, "but I did not come to speak of that. Are you very busy?"

"Not so busy but that I can give you a portion of my time, my dear child," he said, fondly. "What is it you wish?"

"You promised me, a short time ago, that you would tell me all you know of my parentage," she said. "I claim your promise now."

"Why do you wish it?"

"I will tell you that at some other time, dear father. At present I am eager to know all you can tell."

"That is very little, my dear one," drawing a chair near him and asking her to sit down. "I hope you are not tired of me?"

"You have been only too kind to an unprotected girl," she said, taking the seat at his side and throwing an arm about his neck. "My wishes have been law in a house where I have hardly the claim of a servant. No father could do more for a daughter than you have done for me. I was not

thinking of that, but the thought that I am nameless makes me very sad."

"You are not nameless, Coralie. You have the name of Lavalle, an honorable name and an old one, handed down by a long line of good men and true. I will tell you all I know. Ten years ago, I was walking alone in the poor quarter of Quebec, in the middle of the day. A ragged boy, seeing me passing by, ran out and called to me, and entreated me to come in and see his father, who was very sick. I went in, and found a man lying upon a rude pallet in the last stages of consumption. His skin had that transparent waxen hue so often seen in those who are the victims of that terrible disease, and his lips already bore the ashy hue of death.

"I drew a chair and sat beside his bed, and as I did so I recognized him. He was at one time color-sergeant in a cavalry regiment in France—a wild young blade, with a good heart—a man who would do any thing for a friend, and who never forgot a kindness. His name was Jacques Crillon.

"'Jacques,' I said, 'I am sorry to see you so low.'

"'It is nearly over, Monsieur Lavalle,' he said, feebly. 'Almost over; the old soldier of France is very near his end. I did not expect when the boy ran out to call you in, that it would prove to be the man who has been so kind to me in the times long past. I can not talk much, but have a duty to perform. Louis!'

"The boy came in, and kneeled weeping at the bedside.

"'Do not weep, my boy,' he said. 'Remember that I have little time to spare and much to do. Bring the small brass-bound box from the chest.'

"The boy sprung up and hurried into a little room which opened into the one in which the sick man lay.

"'Tis a good lad, monsieur,' said Crillon. 'Be kind to him when I am gone, for he is the child of a soldier who has fought for France, though my sins are many. Coralie, come in.'

"Then a beautiful child, yourself, dear one, came out of the little room and stood beside the bed. Yes, in poverty, in that poor hut, you were beautiful, and I loved you from that hour, for you were the living image of a little daughter I lost, many years ago.

" ' You see her, monsieur ? ' he said, ' this dear child. She is eight years old, and has been more than a daughter to me, but she has not a daughter's claim upon me. For the boy I have no fear, for he is old enough to take care of himself, but who will shelter this frail flower from the evils which are in the world ? '

" I called you to me, and you climbed upon my knee, and laid your golden head against my breast. It had been so long since a little child had nestled there, that I felt my heart warm again, and a hope came into my heart that you would love me, and take the place of the child I had lost. I stopped Crillon as he was about to speak.

" ' I think I understand you, sergeant. You wish this child to be provided for ? '

" ' Yes, yes; that is it. Let her be taken care of, and there is nothing more for me to hope for or to wish.'

" ' You say that she is not your child ? '

" ' No.'

" ' You do not know her father ? '

" ' I can not tell you that. All I know of her is contained in this box,' he said, pointing to a small box in the hands of the boy, who had come out of the room with it in his hands.

" Give it to the gentleman, Louis.'

" The boy laid it on my knee, but I did not open it.

" ' No need to look at this now, sergeant. As you say, you may die soon, and I wish to set your heart at rest. Would it satisfy you if I took this child to be my own, and reared her up as one of my class ? '

" ' Would you do that ? ' he gasped.

" ' If you will give her to me.'

" ' She is yours ! This is more than I hoped for, and I am content to die. Louis, look at this gentleman, and remember his name. If the time ever comes when you can be of use to him, and that time may come—for stranger things happen in this world—do it, even to laying down your life for his sake.'

" ' I will remember, father. But, is the gentleman about to take Coralie away ? '

" ' Yes.'

" ' He need not take that trouble. Coralie and I have ar-

ranged it already. I am to take care of her and get rich, and when we are old enough she is to be my wife.'

"Hear the boy!" said the sergeant, laying his hand upon the boy's dark hair. "He would do it too, if he had his will. Listen to me, Louis. It is a long and hard path by which fame and riches are gained, and in that path this tender child would see much sorrow. This gentleman will give Coralie a home at once, and a happy one, and you can work out your own future. You will not stand in her way?"

"No," replied the boy, with a sob; "but Coralie loves me now, and he will let her forget me, if I go away."

"You sprung down from my knee and ran to him, and held up your hands:

"No, no, Louis," you said. "I will not forget you, and when you are rich you will come to me, and I will be your wife."

"The boy raised you in his arms and kissed you, and then set you upon my knee again.

"Take her, monsieur, and be kind to her," he said. "It is hard to give her up, but for her sake I can bear it. I promise not to trouble you or her until I have made a name for myself, and when that is done I will come to you."

"And you shall be welcome, my brave boy," I said. "But why not come with me now? I can give you much help."

"He would not agree to that; neither would his father allow it. They said I would do enough if I gave you a shelter and a home. While we talked of your future I saw that Crillon was nearly gone and took his hand. The damp of death was on it, and he beckoned me to bend closer.

"Keep the box," he said, "it may be of use to the child. Take my other hand, Louis. Kiss me, boy; your father is going home. Mother! Wife!"

"And with the names of those whom he had loved upon his lips, the soldier of France died. After the funeral, I missed Louis, and from that time to this I have never seen him. He has not come to me, but from time to time he has sent me a messenger to say that he was doing well and to thank me for my care of you."

"I remember him as a child remembers," she said. "I was

only eight years old, and he was fifteen. He is a man now, and I think a noble one. But, why does he not come to us?"

"I do not know. For two years I have not heard from him in any way. God be with him, wherever he may be, for he had a noble heart."

"Did you open the box?"

"No. I have kept it carefully since that time, and if you wish it shall be opened now."

He went to a sort of safe or cabinet in one corner of the room, which was closed with a peculiar lock, unlike any other in the colony.

"I am proud of my lock," he said, as he turned the key. "There is only one key in the world which will open it, and that I have in my hands."

The door of the cabinet swung open and revealed a number of articles of value, plate and jewelry, and from the darkest corner he took a small brass-bound box with a key hanging to it by a string.

"Bring it to the table, father," cried Coralie, eagerly. "Let me know all I can of my past life."

He brought the box and put it down before her, keeping his hand upon the lid. His face was working strangely, for the old man loved her for the sake of that child so long dead.

"If this box should contain the record which will point out your true father," he said, hoarsely, "I shall lose you."

"No, no; you will still be to me the dearest father any orphan ever knew. Open it quickly."

"You shall open it," he said, putting the key in her hand, and dropping his head upon his palm. "I have not the heart to do it."

He heard the key turn in the lock, heard the grating of the rusty hinges, and Coralie uttered an exclamation of surprise. Looking up quickly, he saw the box open before her, and she was looking wildly into it. The box was empty!

CHAPTER XII.

THE FATAL SIGN.

ANTOINE, the spy of Colonel Lefebre, did not love his master. He was bound to him by no common tie, for his secrets, which were many and bloody, were in his master's hands, while he knew enough of the past life of the colonel to work him great evil. Upon his return to the city, after his encounter with the Recluse and his friends, he went at once to his master, the colonel, and had Lefebre received him kindly, there is a chance that he might have betrayed what had happened in the cave, and joined the officer in a plot against the Moor and his master. But the colonel was in a bad humor, having just parted with Coralie, and his first greeting of Antoine made the man angry.

"Ha, you have come back, then you scoundrel? Why did you wait so long?"

"I came as soon as I could," replied the man sullenly.

"You lie! you have had a bottle of brandy under a tree and have been drinking. I know you, you lazy hound!"

Antoine remained sullenly silent, a frown upon his dark face.

"Don't put on that face to me unless you wish to go to the halberds, *Canaille*," cried the colonel. "What have you done?"

"I tried to find the lurking place of the Recluse of Mont Royale but could not. Whether he sunk into the earth I know not, but I could not find him."

"You are drunk!"

"Monsieur le Colonel, if I am drunk, take me out and whip me. I have not had a drop since that which you gave me this morning."

"You are a natural liar, and I can not tell when to believe you," said the colonel. "Let it pass for the present. Go to Major Leslie's quarters, and tell him that a suspicious character, whom I believe to be a spy, is lurking upon Mont Royale.

Order him to send out a guard of twelve men to take the person prisoner, alive or dead."

"Your orders shall be obeyed, sir. Is the guard to go at once?"

"Yes, you will go with them and do your best to point out the place where he was last seen. If he is taken, I agree to give you ten Louis."

"Agreed! I will do my best."

Half an hour after the detail started in the direction of Mont Royale, under the lead of a gray-haired sergeant, a man who had served France well for over forty years. Antoine was with them, though he had no real wish to be serviceable to his master, and was far from any design of laying a hand upon the terrible Recluse. The guard proceeded at a brisk pace, but as they crossed the plain which intervened between the city and the mountain, they were met by a young Indian, in the war-dress of the Hurons of the lakes—a stalwart, muscular young man, in a light buck-skin hunting-shirt, adorned with beads after the Indian fashion, and carrying a gun, knife and hatchet.

He looked keenly at the guard and was passing them without a word, when the sergeant stopped him.

"Can my brother speak the language of his French fathers?"

The Indian replied in broken French, but showed sufficient knowledge of the language to make himself intelligible to the sergeant, who was an old woodman, having been in the country for twenty years.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I am Gehardo the Huron, and have come to smoke a pipe with my white brothers, at Montreal. I have news for the great war-chief, Lefebre."

"Have you traveled far?"

"From the lodges of the Hurons of the Lakes, who love their French brothers," he said, pointing to his ragged and dusty moccasins. "What is a long path to Gehardo, when he can do good for those whom he loves?"

"Are the English stirring, then?"

"No; the English rest in their forts, and we are trying to count the scalps they have lost since the Hurons were last upon the war-path."

"An Indian will brag, no matter how brave he may be," said the sergeant turning to his companions. "Have you crossed Mont-Royale?"

"This?" asked the Indian, pointing to the mountain behind him.

"Yes."

"Gehardo would not make a longer path because the way is rough. He came by that path."

"Did you see any one upon the mountain?"

"Yes. A spirit walks upon the mountains, the ghost of a white man with white hair upon his face which comes down to his knees. It is the spirit of the rocks and trees, and his face was under a cloud. Gehardo, who fears not man, trembled in the presence of the white spirit."

"Where did you see him?"

"He stood upon a rock leaning upon a staff. His eyes were living coals; his voice was as the voice of the Great Spirit when he speaks in the clouds, and the Indians bow themselves. Let my brothers turn back," he said persuasively laying his hand upon the breast of the sergeant, "and let him not face the White Spirit when his anger is hot."

"We must go on," said the sergeant. "If you are not too weary, I would have you go back with us and show us where you saw this White Spirit."

"Gehardo can not go back. His face is set toward the great wigwam of the French, and he can not go back until his work is done. Let not my brothers be angry with Gehardo, because he does as his chief commands."

"Pass on then," said the sergeant, "we also have a duty to perform."

The Indian moved on with a rapid step, and was quickly lost to sight, and the sergeant gave the order to advance. They had scarcely taken a dozen steps when Antoine uttered a cry of terror, and turning, they saw him holding in his hand a small piece of silver, worked into the shape of two crossed swords, his eyes half starting from his head.

"What is that?" asked the sergeant, taking it from his hand, quickly. "Where did you find it?"

"It was hanging on the skirt of my coat," said Antoine, with pale lips trembling with fear.

"Where did it come from?"

"How can I tell? It was not there when I came out of the city."

"It looks like the jewel of a secret order, but what of that? Why, man, you are frightened; your lips are white as ashes, and your face is deadly pale. What does this mean?"

"Nothing," stammered Antoine, appalled at so soon receiving the signal of warning which the Recluse had promised to send, if he became slack in his duty. "I—I—don't understand it, that is all."

"We are wasting time," said the sergeant. "Forward, all."

They quickened their pace, and were soon climbing the smooth sides of the mountain, threading their way through the thick trees. Antoine had fallen behind, and as they passed through a deep thicket, he suddenly disappeared. If they had noticed his departure and gone back to look for him, they would have seen him lying prostrate on the sod, with the foot of Abah on his breast, and the Recluse standing over him with a stern face. The footsteps of the soldiers died away in the distance and Abah, obeying a sign from the Recluse, removed his foot from the breast of the fallen man, and suffered him to rise.

"You have broken your faith early, Antoine," said the Recluse. "What have you to say for yourself to save your life?"

"I swear by the saints that I have not been faithless," pleaded Antoine. "The colonel was dissatisfied with my report, and ordered me to accompany the guard to the mountain."

"For what purpose?"

"To take you prisoner."

"Upon what ground?"

"Upon the ground that you are a spy in the service of the English," replied the man, earnestly. "I could do nothing to stop him, and you ordered me to go back to him and obey him, but to report to you."

"I believe you," said the Recluse. "When you return to your master, take this paper and lay it on his table. Do not let him see you put it there, but keep a watch upon him, and

tell me what he does when he reads it. Make haste now, and rejoin the soldiers, and have no fear of any thing they can do to me. I am over and above such petty annoyances."

Antoine hurried on, and found the soldiers clustered together, eagerly discussing their future course. They had missed Antoine, and concluded that he had taken flight and turned back.

"Diables, Antoine!" cried the sergeant. "What a fright you have been in. You must not hang back in this manner or you will feel the weight of my hand."

"I hurt my foot and had to stop," replied Antoine. "I am no more frightened than yourself, sergeant, and we are wasting time here. You will never catch this Will-o'-the-wisp of whom you are in pursuit."

"Fools!" cried a hollow voice close at hand. "Go back to your master and tell him that the Recluse of Mont Royale is not to be taken by such as he."

The voice seemed to come from the woods close at hand; and, shouting to his men to follow, the sergeant sprung forward in the direction of the voice. They penetrated the woods a short distance, when a burst of savage laughter in the same voice sounded upon the spot they had just left, and all paused in utter confusion and dismay.

"What means this?" whispered the sergeant. "It is witchcraft."

"You pursue a phantom," cried the same voice from another quarter. "Dogs, minions of a petty despot, fly for your lives! The soldiers of Lefebre shall never lay a hand upon the Recluse of Mont Royale!"

"This way," roared the sergeant, drawing his sword. "Come on!"

Again he darted in the direction of the voice, and again he came back, baffled and confused. The sergeant paused, and wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead. He was a man not easily frightened, but this was something beyond him, something which he did not understand. The common soldiers were trembling, and Antoine looked triumphant.

"Let us go back," he said. "The Indian was right, and we are fighting a shadow. You never can take this strange being."

"Show yourself," shrieked the sergeant. "Come out and face a man without a stain."

Mocking laughter was the only reply from an entirely different part of the woods—strange sounds seemed to surround them—hollow, murmuring sounds, piercing the murky atmosphere. A sense of oppression, of utter dread, seemed to hem them in. The sergeant was not naturally superstitious, and yet he could not understand or explain these strange phenomena.

"One more effort," he said, "and then if we fail I shall be ready to believe with you that we are under a spell. Show me the place where the colonel met this strange being."

Antoine led the way in silence to the crest of the mountain and came to the spot where the encounter had taken place. Stooping, he picked up from the earth the fragments of the colonel's sword and handed them to the sergeant.

"You know the temper of the blade the colonel wore, and that it is not easily broken; yet he tells me that he thrust it at the heart of this old man, and it broke like paper against his breast. Can we fight against such a creature as that?"

"It is hopeless, I fear," replied the sergeant, "and yet I can not give it up. If I could only see him—"

"Look this way," cried a hollow, passionless voice, like a sound from the grave.

All eyes were turned in the direction of the sound, and there, standing upon the verge of the forest, twenty paces away, was the strange being known as the Recluse of the Mountain. The sergeant was about to rush forward, when the hand of the strange man was lifted and he paused.

"Stop," he said. "You think that I am one of your order, and that what you have seen and heard is nothing but fancy. I will prove what I am to you. You have a pistol in your belt; is it loaded?"

"It is."

"You can aim straight?"

"I think so."

"Take your pistol and fire at my heart. I give you leave."

"My orders were to take you alive. Be ready, men."

"Fool! You can not take me, but do as I command."

The sergeant took the pistol from his belt, cocked it, and

aimed at the immovable breast of the Recluse. Twice he lowered it, being a brave man, but a taunting laugh from the Recluse made him angry and he fired. The smoke floated slowly upward, and they saw the Recluse put his hand into his bosom, take out the bullet and cast it at the feet of the sergeant. Human nature could stand no more, and, with yells of terror, the soldiers turned and fled down the mountain-side, eager only as to who could be first in the city of Montreal.

CHAPTER V.

THE MURDEROUS COMPACT.

NIGHT in the city of Montreal, deep and dark. A solemn stillness rested upon it, save where now and then the call of the sentry announced the safety of his post, or when a patrol or guard-relief passed swiftly by on some secret mission. The lights were out in nearly every house, but one burned in the library window of Monsieur Lavalle, and he was there, but not alone. Lefebre was with him, seated at the other side of the table with a savage look upon his handsome face.

"Once more I ask you, Monsieur Lavalle, if I obtain your daughter's love, will you give your consent?"

"I make no promises in advance, my dear colonel. If Coralie should love you, far be it from me to stand in the way of her happiness. But, from what I have heard her say, I doubt if there is any hope for you."

"Have your own way, monsieur," said the colonel, sullenly. "But you must beware of one thing. Look out that her father does not come to life to dispossess you of the daughter you love."

"What do you mean? Who told you any thing, Lefebre?"

"Never mind that now. I am not easily baffled, and I have sworn to make this lady my wife. No one shall come between us, and if he does he goes down. Look to yourself, for you have made me your enemy."

"This interview had better end, colonel," said Lavalle,

rising. "I am not accustomed to threats, nor will I endure them, even from you."

"I have not threatened you, sir, nor have I any *intention* of doing so. As you desire to terminate this interview, I will leave you, with the understanding that you soon hear from me again."

Lavalle rung a bell at his elbow and a servant entered.

"Show Colonel Lefebre out, Henri, and bear in mind that I am not at home to him at any time until further orders. You may instruct your fellow-servants in this respect. Colonel Lefebre, good-night."

The colonel bowed low, and walked out quietly. In the corridor he met Coralie, who was passing him with a quiet nod, when he stopped her by a gesture.

"Excuse me, mademoiselle; I have something to communicate."

"Be as quick as possible, colonel, as it is getting late."

"I shall not detain you long. I merely wish to inform you that your father has forbidden me the house. Was this done at your request?"

"I know nothing of it, but no doubt you gave him good cause."

"Then you uphold him? That is all I wished to know, and I bid you good-night."

As the door closed upon him, Lefebre stopped and looked back at the house. There was something fearful in the look with which he regarded it, and if Coralie had seen him then, she must have been satisfied that he was a bad man at heart.

"Now that I have been insulted," he muttered, "I shall have the heart to go to work. But, this Recluse is a heavy burden on me. Who and what is he? What does he know of the follies and crimes of my past life? I would give ten thousand Louis' to know that he is under the sod."

"Done!" whispered a low voice. "Consider him under the sod, whoever he may be."

Lefebre wheeled quickly, with his hand upon his sword, and saw a man standing close by, watching him.

"Who are you?" he cried.

"A desperate man," replied the other. "You mentioned a large sum of money. I should be glad to earn it."

"Your name?"

"What are names to you or me? Call me any name you like, but employ me. I give you my word that when you spoke your thoughts aloud just now I was on the point of knocking you down for the sake of any valuables you might have about you. I have changed my mind, and would like to have you employ me."

"Do you know the way to Colonel Lefebre's quarters?"

"Yes."

"Have you the word?"

"I have."

"Then proceed at once to the colonel's quarters and show this ring to the guard and tell him that you were instructed by the man who gave you this to wait in the hall until he comes. I think you are the man I want, but I can tell better when I see how you look."

The man took the ring and strode rapidly away, while the colonel stood for a moment in deep thought, and then followed the stranger slowly. The moment he was gone a dark figure stole out of the shadow of the building and followed him with a rapid, noiseless tread, far enough behind not to be easily detected. But the colonel was a wary man, and he had not gone many steps when he became satisfied that some one was following him. He made no sign to indicate this knowledge, but kept on his course, with his hand upon the hilt of a pistol ready for action, until he met the patrol, who stopped him. Having given the word, he beckoned the sergeant in charge of the patrol to come closer.

"Some one follows me," he said. "See who it is, and if he is one who can not give an account of himself, bring him to the guard-house."

The patrol moved away and the dark figure which had followed the colonel came to a stand, and looked quickly about him.

"*Halte la!*!" cried the patrol, as he saw this hesitation. "Advance, and give the word."

Instead of obeying the summons, the person turned upon his heel and ran swiftly down a narrow street to the right. The patrol instantly started in pursuit, but they might as well have chased the wind. When they reached the entrance to

the street the object of their suspicion was already out of sight, and they could not hear the sound of his feet.

"The devil!" muttered the sergeant. "Now what shall we say when we report this in the morning?"

"My advice is to say nothing about it, my sergeant," said one of the men. "It can only get us into trouble, and it is not our fault if we can not catch a fellow who runs like a fox."

"That is true," said the sergeant. "Let us agree then upon one story, in case the colonel should make inquiries. The person turned out to be a citizen who knew the word, and gave a good account of himself."

"Agreed."

"Forward then, *mes enfants!*" said the sergeant, in a cheerful tone. "Let us do our duty."

The feet of the patrol had scarcely ceased to sound when the same dark figure stole out of the narrow street, and before the colonel had gone a dozen squares he was again followed and watched. But, this time the spy was more careful, and the colonel did not detect him, until he stopped in front of his own quarters, and received the salute of the guard at the door.

"A man came half an hour ago and showed your ring, and now waits for you in the hall, mon colonel," said the man.

"Very well," replied the colonel. "I sent him here to await my orders. Has Antoine come in?"

"Yes, mon colonel."

"Has Sergeant Darnay been here to report?"

"He has, mon colonel, and now waits in the hall."

The colonel passed the guard and entered the hall, where he found Sergeant Darnay and Antoine conversing in eager tones, and the man he had sent in seated in one corner of the hall, fast asleep.

"Follow me, sergeant," said Lefebre. "You are to come also, Antoine."

The two men followed him submissively to his private room, and stood awaiting his orders. The colonel was in no hurry, for he got out a bottle of brandy, filled a bumper for each man, and poured out a little for himself.

"Drink that off before you begin, my men," he said, "and then I will hear your report. I drink to you."

"And I to you, mon colonel," said the sergeant. "Are you ready to hear my report?"

"Have you been successful?"

"No."

"Then make your story as short as you can, and get it done."

Sergeant Darnay was not a man to waste words, and in as brief space as possible he told all that had happened that afternoon upon Mont Royale. Lefebre heard him in silence, toying carelessly with his glass as he proceeded, and occasionally taking a sip from the contents.

"I am not surprised that you failed, Sergeant Darnay," he said, when the report was finished. "You had no common man to deal with, and I am far from certain that I should have succeeded any better in person. I believe that you have done all that was possible under the circumstances, and I reflect no discredit upon you for your failure. You say that you had a fair shot at this strange being?"

"At twenty paces, colonel. You know that I am not likely to miss a fair mark at that distance, and I am sure the bullet struck him over the heart."

"Yet he plucked it from his clothing and flung it back at you?"

"He did."

"What became of him then?"

"He disappeared, faded out of sight like a vision. I am not ashamed to say that I did not stop to look for him after that."

"Your report is accepted, sergeant, and you may return to your quarters. If I need you again I will send you word. You may go too, Antoine, and as you pass through the hall awake the man who is sleeping there, and bring him to the door of my room. And, look you, do not dare to spy about my door after that, but retire to your room at once."

"Yes, colonel," said Antoine, humbly.

A moment after the man who had been in waiting rapped at the door and was admitted at once. The colonel looked keenly at him as he entered, and pointed to a chair. The

man took the seat indicated, and the two looked at each other in silence for full five minutes. The stranger was clothed in garments which had once been of rich stuff but were now faded and worn. A certain jaunty air indicated that he had once moved in the higher rank of life, but his face was that of one made prematurely aged by excess and riot. The prominent expression was of complete recklessness, as of a person who cared nothing for his future course. His frame was powerful, and he was still active and strong.

"I have obeyed your orders, and I am here," he said. "What do you require of me? I tell you beforehand that I am so careless of my fortune that it matters nothing to me how desperate the adventure I am called upon to undertake if the success of the enterprise is repaid in money to a sufficient amount."

"Move your chair up to the table, sir," said the colonel. "You overheard what I said when I came out of that house to-night. Could you take upon yourself to put an obnoxious person out of the way?"

"I said so. What is a man's life? I have had my own in my hand, ready to yield up for the last ten years. I care nothing for the life of any one, if it stands in my way. Who is this you wish to see put under the sod?"

"There is a person who haunts Mont Royale. He is known as the Recluse—an old man, who walks with a staff, and has a long gray beard reaching to his waist. This creature has insulted me by references to events in my past life which I would keep secret, and I will give a large sum to know that he is no more."

"How much will you give for this knowledge? Of course I know that you will not offer the amount which you named to-night, neither will I exact it. But say for yourself what you regard this man's life as worth."

"Two thousand Louis."

"Paid down?"

"Paid when you bring me certain evidence that he is dead."

"What would you regard as certain evidence?"

"I must see the body or a part of it."

"How much time do you give me for the work?"

"It must be done quickly. The longer he lives, the more danger I am in. He must not be allowed to come to Montreal, or to see a lady who resides here, who is called Coralie Lavalle."

"Are you particular as to the manner in which he meets his death?"

"I am not. By steel, bullet or poison, as you like."

"You are a cool hand, mon colonel," said the man, quietly. "It is a pleasure to talk with you, for you come to the point at once and call things by their right names. I agree to your terms, and will endeavor to carry out your plans at once. You say that he lurks in Mont Royale: may I ask if he has a habitation of any kind there?"

"I do not know. You must lie in wait for him until he shows himself, and then do your work. What shall I call you?"

"Call me, Neville. I had a name once, as proud as the proudest; but I have lost my claim to it long ago—am nameless, homeless, friendless, the tool of any man who is willing to pay me for the strength that is in my arm. I had better keep this ring you have given me, as a means of gaining access to you readily."

"Yes. Let us drink to the success of your work."

The brandy was poured out, and the man called Neville held his glass up to the light and watched the gleams in its clear depths.

"Ay, sparkle and shine, seducing liquid. This it is that led me astray; this it is which drove me out from the society of my kind and made me a murderer and outlaw. This my toast: To the speedy death of the Recluse of Mont Royale."

"To the death of the Recluse of Mont Royale," repeated Colonel Lefebre.

"Fools," cried a solemn voice. "His life is not at the mercy of such villains as you!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSING PAPERS.

THE glass dropped from the raised hand of Colonel Lefebre and was shivered to fragments at his feet, while Neville, whose nerves were under better control, looked up with a laugh.

"A spy," he said in a whisper. "By the powers we will have him out, and he is no better than a dead man, whoever he may be."

A hollow laugh filled the room, and the colonel sat trembling, not strong enough to raise his hand from the table. His fear was infectious, for Neville began to look blankly at his employer.

"Do you recognize the voice?"

"Yes; it is the voice of the man you are to kill, the Recluse of Mont Royale."

"Ha! you say well that this is no common man," said Neville, springing to the window. "I will see to this."

He flung open the blind and looked out. As he did so a flash illuminated the darkness outside, and he received a blow which sent him reeling to the floor. He recovered in an instant, and, with a cry of rage, sprung at the window and leaped to the earth, eight feet below. Lefebre heard him running to and fro in eager haste, but he soon came back and climbed into the window with a look of deep surprise upon his face.

"If I were not a reasonable man I should say that this was the work of the devil himself," he hissed. "I can find no trace of any one about the house, and the guard says that nobody has passed his post. You have good reason to fear this man, whoever he may be. No old one ever dealt such a blow as that which I received five minutes ago."

"He struck me once, and nearly broke my arm," said the colonel. "Pick up that paper on the floor; it was not there before."

Neville stooped and raised the paper and cast his eyes hastily over it and laid it down before Lefebre.

"For you," he said, quietly. Lefebre drew the light nearer and looked at the document with wildly dilating eyes.

"Beware!" it said. "The measure of your guilt was full, long since, and your doom is near at hand. Woe to you and yours when that doom is pronounced. The ghosts of your murdered victims have come about me by night and asked me why you are spared so long, and I can not answer them. Do no wrong to Coralie Lavalle, or to the good old man who gives her a home, lest a worse thing happen to you. Your new tool will find to his cost what it is to deal with."

"THE RECLUSE OF MONT ROYALE."

"He is a bold fellow, by heaven," said Neville, bringing his clenched hand heavily down upon the table. "It will be worth my while to pit myself against him, but I shall conquer in the end."

"You think he was here in person?" said Lefebre, trembling. "I seem to feel his presence near me now."

"Not a doubt in my mind that he knows that I am his enemy. What of that? If I do not fear, you need not."

"I do not fear him," replied the colonel, looking about him in a manner which belied his words. "He need not think to frighten me."

"Is there any other work for me to do after he is under the sod?"

"Plenty of work, if you can accomplish this. You shall roll in riches if you can do what you have promised."

"I shall do it," replied Neville. "Come closer to me and I will tell you my plans."

And the two sat by the table drinking deeply, and perfecting the plot which was to work the downfall of their enemies.

Meanwhile, those enemies were not idle. In the darkness three figures stole softly to the back part of the building, and the door at once opened and admitted them. The one who opened the door was Antoine, who cast terrified glances at the three somber figures wrapped in long cloaks from head to foot, but did not utter a word. They followed him at once through the silent house, walking with cautious steps, and he did not feel at ease until the door of his own room was closed upon them. Then one of them let his hood drop from his

face and he saw the long, white beard, pale face and gleaming eyes of the Recluse.

"So far you have been faithful, my friend," he said. "But, woe to you if you dare to break faith even in thought. These men are still over their bottle?"

"Yes."

"Do you think they will call for more liquor?"

"In an hour's time my master will be tired of the *eau de vie* and call for a favorite wine, which is kept in yonder closet."

"Is it in bottles?"

"Yes."

"Do you uncork it, or does he?"

"I generally do that."

"Very good. You will take this small bottle, and hold it in your hand as you take out the cork. Without being seen by either of them you must manage to drop the contents into the bottle."

"I—I dare not."

"You *dare* not; beware!"

"Is it poison?" gasped Antoine.

"No, fool! I give you my word that the quantity in this bottle will do no permanent harm to any one. It will put them to sleep and leave me at liberty to search the room, as I must do before I leave this house. Come, say the word; do you obey or not?"

"I obey."

"You will do well. Obey me in every thing and your fortune is made. You are not doing the will of a despotic master, but you are laboring in behalf of the innocent against the guilty. What is that bell?"

"From my master's room. It calls for me."

"Go then, but be cautious."

Antoine hurried out and was gone but a few moments. As he expected, the colonel had sent him for wine.

"Do you think he will be angry if you open the bottle here?"

"No."

"Then open it, and since you are so squeamish, I will put the narcotic in with my own hand."

Antoine went into the closet and quickly appeared with a bottle of wine and a corkscrew. He threw off the wire and lead and drew the cork, and the delicate aroma of the pure liquor filled the room. The Recluse emptied the contents of the small vial into the bottle, shook it up well and replaced the cork lightly.

"That will do. In twenty minutes after he has taken that he will be asleep, and we can work with safety. Our course may not be right in the eyes of the law, but it is the course of justice and truth. I will wait here until you return, Antoine."

The servant went out with the wine, and shortly returned, with a pale, scared face.

"Did they drink of the wine?" said the Recluse, sternly.

"Yes," he said. "Oh, if you have deceived me—if it turns out to be poison!"

"Poison, you blockhead! Am I a man likely to commit a murder?"

"I don't know—you hate this man so much," murmured Antoine. "But, you promise to bear me blameless."

"We will so arrange it that it will seem to be the work of robbers, friend Antoine," said the Recluse; "you shall be bound hand and foot when we leave you."

Half an hour passed, and the three stole silently to the door of the colonel's room and listened. All was silent as the grave. The Recluse looked through the keyhole, and saw that a light yet burned and the two men were sitting at a table with their heads resting upon it, as if asleep.

"All safe," he said. "Come in, all of you, but be very careful how you step."

They entered the room, and to make sure that the sleeping men did not awake too soon, they were bound and gagged, and laid upon the floor. The shutters of the apartment had been closed after Neville leaped out in search of the owner of the voice who had interrupted them over their nefarious plans. The Recluse did not waste time, but set to work upon the cabinet which stood in the room. It was opened with some difficulty. A mass of papers were tumbled out upon the table, and two of the men began to turn them over eagerly, evidently searching for particular ones. The search

for a time seemed likely to be unsuccessful, for nothing rewarded their search. That the object was not robbery was plain, for various articles of value were tossed aside carelessly when they came in their way. At last one of them took up an old fashioned miniature and tossed it to the Recluse.

"That is something," cried the strange man, eagerly. "The papers must be here, for they were together."

"Does this look like it?" said the other, throwing a parchment across the table. The Recluse unfolded it, looked hurriedly at the contents and uttered a low exclamation of joy.

"Found!" he cried, eagerly, "after years of sorrow and pain—found at last! Come away, friends; our work here is done!"

CHAPTER VII.

LOUIS CHASTELLAR AND LE SABREUR.

COLONEL LEFEBRE was found by the servants next morning lying upon his back in an uncomfortable position, his feet lying across the body of Neville, who was in a like unhappy strait. We will pass over the various phases of ornamental blasphemy through which they passed, when they once more obtained the use of their tongues. When Lefebre saw his cabinet in confusion, papers tossed about the floor, gold and jewels gleaming everywhere, he uttered a cry of dismay and sprung to collect the scattered papers. He knew by a species of intuition exactly what papers he should miss, and his face was like ashes as he searched for them, knowing all the time that his search was in vain.

"What have you lost?" demanded Neville.

"Something which I value dearer than my life, and which I must have at any sacrifice. All my plans are baffled if I can not recover them; my very life is in danger."

"Who do you think has it?"

"The man most likely to use it against me—the Recluse of Mont Royale."

"Ha!" said Neville. "I must get to work, if I am to

earn two thousand Louis' to-day. How light my head feels! I might almost think I had been drugged. By the way; do you remember whether that wine was touched or not when your fellow brought it in last night?"

"I think it was not," said the colonel. "Yes it was though."

"I remember, if you do not," said Neville. "The bottle was uncorked, for I remember that the fellow had the cork-screw fixed in the top when he came in, and whipped it out smartly as he set the bottle down. Is there any left in the bottle?"

"Very little."

"Enough for my purpose," said Neville, shaking the bottle. "If it is drugged, I can find it out as easily from a drop as from a gallon. I have a friend in St. James who is a chemist, and with your permission I will take this down and get him to test it."

"Do so; prove to me that Antoine has played me false and his doom is sealed."

Antoine, who had been released some time before, was now spying at the key-hole. He knew his danger, if that liquor ever came into the hands of a chemist. Death would be his portion, for the colonel would not forgive an injury like this.

"The bottle must never go to the chemist's," he muttered. "At any hazard, I must stop that."

"Never mind it just now, Neville," said Lefebre, putting the bottle in the cabinet. "We have not the time to waste upon such small game as Antoine until our main enemy is disposed of. That once done, I will find a way to settle with my servant, if he is guilty."

Antoine breathed more freely. He was reprieved, and it would give him a chance to steal the bottle before they thought of it again. While they were yet in consultation, a man came up to say that an Indian wished to see the colonel.

"An Indian?" said Lefebre.

"Yes; a Huron."

"Ah; I will go down and see him, for it is the policy of the Marquis to keep on good terms with the red knaves."

He went down, and found the young brave whom the guard

had met at the foot of Mont Royale stalking up and down the hall, waiting for him.

"What do you wish with me?" demanded the colonel.

"The Huron keeps his eyes open. The war-chief sent me to say that the Yengees do not sleep and know that our French father is about to drive them out of the Mohawk country. A white chief who is with the Huron sent this."

And from beneath his blanket the young chief drew out a paper which he handed to the colonel. It was a dispatch from a scout who had been working in the section to the west of Ticonderoga. The news was unimportant, and Lefebre tore the paper with an exclamation of disgust.

"Have you nothing more to say, Huron?"

"Yes; yesterday as I crossed the mountain I met your young men, who were searching for the Graybeard who dwells in the mountains. I told them I had seen him and they went their way. My father, I have seen him again."

"Where; when?"

"One question at a time," said the Huron. "The tongue of a chief is not double."

"When did you see him?"

"Last night."

"Where?"

"In the path between the great wigwams of the white men. He came to me like a shadow, and he spoke words of terror in the ears of Gehardo. Listen, my brother. I have seen the sky when the Great Spirit is angry. I have looked on the big water, Ontario, when the stormy wind was at play, and I did not tremble. Yet, Gehardo fears the Graybeard. He spoke and the Huron heard his voice, and trembled, and obeyed his commands."

"What were they?"

"He said: 'Go to the war-chief, Lefebre, and give him this.'"

As he spoke he put his hand into his bosom and drew out a ring, which he placed in the hand of the colonel. Lefebre started as though a serpent had stung him, and uttered a cry of agony terrible to hear. The immovable face of the Indian did not change, and he looked quietly at the colonel, evidently surprised at his emotion.

"You red villain," he screamed. "How dare you bring this to me?"

"Does my brother ask the question? Who would dare to disobey the words of the Graybeard, whose anger would be terrible? Gehardo has done his bidding and now he will go."

The Indian wrapped his blanket about him and stalked away, unheeding the call of the colonel to return. Lefebre picked up the ring and looked at it closely.

"The hand which wore this ring has been dust and ashes for fifteen years. How then has it come back to me? Oh, my God, will punishment never cease? Must all the evils of my life come home to me now? Poor, wronged, beautiful Juliette, the man who sent you to your grave will never know a happy hour. Yet I was not all to blame. He came—he stole you from me, and I never forgot nor forgave the injury. I must go on in my work, and never falter nor turn back, even though you rise from your grave to accuse me."

He hid the ring in his bosom and went back slowly to the room in which he had left Neville. Half an hour after the accomplice left the city and moved toward the northern end of the island, walking swiftly as one who had a duty to perform.

At the Three Lilies, at that time the principal inn of Montreal, a gay party of young officers were sitting over their wine, boasting of their conquests and talking of the deeds they were to do when the Great Marquis perfected his plans for the destruction of the English settlements and forts in upper New York, when a young man came in and took a seat at one of the tables and called for a pint of wine. He was tall and strong, and would have been remarkably handsome, but for a peculiar scar which crossed the lower part of his face, and drew his mouth to one side, giving his face an odd expression, as if continually laughing. The young officers looked up and stopped their conversation for a moment, and then went on as before.

"I was telling you about this Louis Chastellar, whom I knew in Quebec," said one, somewhat older than the rest. "As I live by the sword I thought him one of the noblest

young fellows I ever knew, and even now, with the plain proofs we have of his guilt, I can not think of him as a felon."

"What was his crime?"

"He was not only a spy of the English, but he robbed the soldiers of their pay by means of false certificates and orders from the adjutant."

"Was not our colonel adjutant, at that time, Erne?"

"Yes; and he thought no one in the world equal to Chastellar. He was one of the old count's pets, a fellow who had fought his way up from the ranks, and reached the grade of captain by good conduct. I liked him immensely and was cut up sorely when he went to the bad."

The young man at the table poured out a glass of wine and looked fixedly at the speaker. Some unknown emotion seemed struggling in his breast, but he kept silent.

"He was a deadly swordsman too," said the speaker again. "You know that I play well, for some of you have tried me, but I was an infant in his hands. A Le Sabreur himself would have had trouble to keep that deadly point off his breast; poor Louis."

"Was there no doubt of his guilt, then?"

"The count did not find it so, and he was condemned, but managed to escape that night. Since then I have never seen him, but if he is living good luck go with him, for the best of men will sometimes go astray."

At this moment the door opened and a small, compactly-built person with a sinister face, came swaggering in. He had evidently been drinking, and from the manner in which the young man looked at him, it was plain that they regarded him as a person to be avoided. He looked about him with a sneering smile, and sat down at the table occupied by the young stranger, looking at him with a bantering sneer.

"I have not fought this week, gentlemen," he said, boisterously. "Here, waiter; a pint of Canary."

One of the young men bent forward, and whispered a sentence in the ear of the young stranger, who answered by a quiet nod, and the new-comer laughed boisterously.

"That's right, lieutenant; warn him against me, for he

needs it. I must fight some one to-day, if I can find a man who knows how to turn his girdle."

The stranger made no reply but quietly moved his wine to the next table and turned his back upon the bully. He had scarcely done so, when the fellow rose and snatching the glass from the table, drank off the contents and threw the empty vessel upon the floor. The next moment, no one knew how, he was lying in the opposite corner, with the bottoms of his shoes exposed to the public gaze. He was on his feet in an instant, with a vicious look in his twinkling gray eye, the blood trickling from a cut in his lip. A murmur of applause was faintly heard, and that wicked eye glanced from face to face, with a look which they understood. Having dealt the blow the stranger sat down, looking calmly at the angry bully.

"Your attention, if you please, monsieur whatever your name is," said the man who had been knocked down, with laborious politeness. "As a favor to you, I permit you to die by my sword. You will, therefore, rise and receive your death."

"A moment, sir," said the young man, quietly. "This young officer has kindly mentioned that you are called Le Sabreur, and are the famous, or rather infamous, duelist of that name. Do you insist on crossing blades with me? I have no one here who can give me help if I am imposed upon."

"If you will beg my pardon on your knees I will not let you escape. Come; to your guard and quickly."

The stranger rose, and threw off his outer coat, revealing powerful muscles and long arms, the model of a swordsman. He did not seem in any hurry or the least discomposed, and took his position as carelessly as if about to play with the buttons on the foils.

"I will stand by you, if you will permit it, monsieur," said the officer, who had spoken of Louis Chastellar, coming forward. "You need a friend."

"He needs enough to carry out his accursed body," said Le Sabreur, fiercely. "Are you ready?"

"Ready!"

"Get to work," said Erne. "Stand back, garçon. Do

you interfere when gentlemen propose to settle a little affair in your house?"

"But, gentlemen!" cried the landlord.

"Out, you fool," said Erne. "Play, gentlemen."

The steel blades crossed with a sharp hiss, and the stranger, without moving an inch from his first traverse, and with no motion of any part of his person, except his waist and forearm, parried the terrible blade of Le Sabreur with the greatest ease, with a calm smile upon his face. The duelist began to look doubtful, and soon after, in his haste, he gave the stranger an opportunity, which he only took advantage of by touching the duelist lightly over the heart.

"I had you then, monsieur. Pah! you would do well to drop this. I do not wish for your life."

"You must take it or lose your own," hissed Le Sabreur, fiercely. He no longer despised his antagonist, for he saw in him a master of fence, and one far his superior.

"You are tempting your own fate," said the stranger, changing his tactics and beginning to assault in his turn. For a single moment their blades intertwined, and then the stranger took a backward step and bore hard upon his hilt. The sword of Le Sabreur was torn from his grasp and struck the floor with a dull clatter. It was done so suddenly that only one man saw how the work was done and that was Erne.

"I know the trick," he muttered. "Only one man could do it."

The stranger stooped and picked up the sword of Le Sabreur and handed it to him, holding it by the blade. The villain seized it, and thrust at the unprotected bosom of his antagonist so quickly that no one could interfere, and nothing but his own wonderful address and lightness saved him. He held his own sword by the hilt with the point down, but, by a dextrous swing of his body, he allowed the point to pass under his arm and the next moment Le Sabreur lay senseless on the floor, felled by a mighty blow from that powerful left hand.

"Pick the man up, some one," he said. "I will have no more to do with him."

None of the officers would help the cowardly brute, but,

at an order from the landlord, three waiters lifted the senseless form and carried it into another room.

"Gentlemen," said the stranger, "you have my sincere thanks for giving your support to an unknown man, who has not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with any of you. At another time I shall take delight in knowing you. Landlord."

"Yes, monsieur."

"Can you give me a bed here? I am fatigued by a long journey and desire rest."

The landlord obsequiously led the way, and Erne looked after the stranger with a long-drawn breath.

"How dare he come here?" he muttered. "By heaven, it is death to him if he falls alive into the hands of Lefebre."

"What is the matter with you, Erne?" said one of his companions, gayly. "You look as if you had seen a ghost."

Erne laughed it off, but was evidently ill at ease. They were still talking over the matter, glad that the minion of Lefebre had met his match, when Le Sabreur came slowly from the next room. His face was drawn with pain and the blood was still oozing slowly from a cut over his eye.

"You have not seen the last of me, gentlemen. I shall have the pleasure of seeing this fine swordsman shot before a week is out. I know him, Lieutenant Erne Celestin."

Without another word he walked quickly out of the room, leaving the young men looking at each other with astonishment depicted on their faces. Erne Celestin rose soon after and left the house, and watched the discomfited duelist until he was certain that he was making his way toward the colonel's quarters; then he turned quickly on his heel and went back to the Three Lilies. He did not enter at the front, not caring to meet his companions, but passing through an alley-way he came into the house by the back way and found one of the scullions, busy at work in the small room to the right of the kitchen.

"Do you wish to earn a crown quickly, my boy?" he said.

"I am always willing to do that, monsieur lieutenant," said the boy.

"Then take this card, and find the room of the gentleman who fought just now with Captain Le Sabreur."

He wrote a sentence on the card and gave it to the boy, who hurried into the house and came back directly.

"The gentleman will see you," he said. "Come this way."

"Take me up by the back staircase," whispered Erne. "I do not wish to be seen."

The boy nodded, and led the way by a dirty staircase, used only by the servants, to the upper part of the house, and stopped at a door.

"This is the room, monsieur."

Erne took out a Louis and placed it in the boy's hand. "Keep silent about this and I will remember it in the time to come. You can go."

He opened the door without ceremony and the stranger rose to meet him.

"You can not hide yourself from me after I have seen your sword-play, Louis Chastellar," said Erne, holding out his hand. "Have you no greeting for an old friend?"

Chastellar, for it was indeed he, grasped the extended hand warmly.

"One thing which made the enforced exile I am enduring more terrible, was the parting from you, Erne. I am glad to be able to press your hand again."

"You are in danger here," said Celestin. "The man you fought knows or suspects who you are and has gone to Lefebre's quarters. You must escape, and at once. A guard will doubtless be here in five minutes, for it is a short walk to the quarters. It is dark now; let us get into the street, and you may escape."

"I have met dangers before," said Chastellar, beginning to buckle on his sword-belt. "Hark!"

The clatter of armed feet was heard upon the floor below.

"Away, for your life!" cried Celestin. "I will show you the way. The guard is here already."

They darted through the narrow passages, first taking the precaution to lock the door.

"Go back now, Erne," whispered Chastellar; "you can serve me better by delaying them all you can. Do not hesitate, for I know the way."

He sprung down the narrow staircase, while Erne hurried

back. Just as he came into the *salle à manger* he heard the clatter of swords in the rear of the building. Chastellar had met enemies there!

CHAPTER VIII.

HUNTED DOWN.

CORALIE was in the library at Lavalle's house, trying to fix her attention upon a book. The night was dark, and after a while she gave up the attempt at reading and opened the window looking upon the street. Just then a tumult arose and alarm bells rung; she heard the rush of hurried feet, and a man, panting for breath, and bleeding from several wounds, came staggering by. The noises increased more and more all about him and he paused in despair, looking around for some avenue of escape. Seeing her at the open window he sprung forward at once.

"Lady," he gasped "you see an unfortunate but innocent man, beset by enemies, and severely wounded. In the name of our common humanity, I ask you to give me shelter."

"Come in," she whispered.

He entered the window slowly, and she closed it behind him; then drew down the blind. It was not done a moment too soon, for they heard the rattling of arms, and a patrol passed quickly, meeting another party just below the house. They carried torches, and the foremost of the first party addressed the last.

"Have you seen him?"

"*Non*; but he can not escape, for Lefebre has set a cordon about him. Every street is guarded close."

"Then he is either in the Rue Paris or Montcalm. Take the Rue Paris; we will take the other."

The parties separated, hurrying down opposite streets, and Coralie, who had been watching them through the interstices of the blind, turned to the man she had saved. As he saw her face by the light of the lamp he uttered a low cry of surprise.

"*C'est lui*," he muttered. "Oh, have I seen her at last?"

He was wounded slightly in several places, bareheaded, with torn garments and pale face, but there was something in his noble countenance which struck her forcibly.

"What is your name, sir?"

"Louis Chastellar," he replied. "I am followed by the hounds of Lefebre, and have only escaped with my life, by the aid of a sincere friend. But, perhaps Lefebre is your friend?"

"He is not; he is my enemy."

"I am glad of that. It would grieve me to know that one who can be so kind to the unfortunate should have such a friend. What am I to do? They will miss me, and return, I fear."

"I will go to my father, and tell him what has happened. But first, why did you say '*C'est lui*' when you saw me first? Do you know my face?"

"Yes; it is the face of an angel."

"Monsieur!"

"I beg that you will pardon me. One can not always control his thoughts. But, you have saved me from a terrible fate—saved me for work which must be done—a work of just retribution. Go to your father and ask him to come to me, and let him come alone."

She left the room, and shortly after Lavalle came in and grasped the hand of the fugitive warmly.

"You have nothing more to fear, captain," he said. "Here you will be safe until we can find means to send you out of the city, into which you should never have come."

"You know me then, Monsieur Lavalle?"

"I do; and I know you to be a deeply wronged man, but one who can not at present prove his innocence. Let me look to your wounds, for you know I sometimes dabble in surgery."

The cuts which Chastellar had received were all upon the arms and shoulders, and Lavalle dressed them quickly, with the skill of an experienced practitioner.

"That is well. None of these hurts are dangerous, but you had better be quiet for a while. I heard something of this affair half an hour ago. How did you escape?"

" You know that Erne Celestin came to warn me ?"

" Yes. He is a gallant young man, and does not easily forget old friendship."

" After he left me I ran down the staircase and was encountered by two soldiers. You may be sure I easily disposed of them, but one of them hurt me in the shoulder before he went down. I ran through an alley, and unfortunately stumbled upon a party of four, coming up. There was no time to retreat, so I went at them, and managed to break through, but not until I got these other hurts you have seen. In the meantime the alarm had been given ; they guarded all the avenues of escape and I found myself in a net. By good fortune I saw your daughter at a window, appealed to her for aid, and she gave it."

" You might be sure of that, captain, if you knew her as well as I do. Hark ! they are gathering again, and barking back upon the trail like hounds who have lost the scent. I must send you away, for they may attempt to search the house."

He went to the door and called Coralie. " Show Captain Chastellar the room next to yours, my dear. I do not like to trust any of the servants, for they might babble. When you have done this, come to the library."

They hurried out, and he took his seat at the table and affected to write. Five minutes after came a thundering rap at the door, and he rose, threw open the blind, and looked out. A party of soldiers were grouped about the portico, holding torches in their hands. Foremost among them stood Lefebre and the duelist who had been worsted in the encounter with Chastellar.

" Come this way, gentlemen, if you have any thing to say to me. My servants have retired long ago."

Lefebre left the steps and came to the window.

" We are in pursuit of a ruffian called Chastellar, who is doomed to death for a crime committed three years ago. He was last seen entering this street, and we fear he is lying concealed in some house."

" What should I know of your criminals, Colonel Lefebre, and why do you single out my house ?"

" No matter ; we wish to enter and search the house."

"By what right do you make such a demand?" said the old man, turning to whisper to Coralie, who had just entered the room, and left it again to obey that low order.

"By my right as commandant of this post, sir, I command you to open your door and admit me."

"Your order shall be obeyed, Monsieur le Colonel," said Lavalle. "Any insult you may put upon me must be put up with, I suppose. Wait, and I will arouse my servants as I wish them to see that nothing is *stolen* while you are in the house."

"Do you mean to insult me, sir?" said the colonel.

Lavalle made no reply, but moved at a leisurely pace and opened the doors of the house.

"You and Captain Le Sabreux will be sufficient to search the house unless you are afraid of this concealed man," said Lavalle, sneeringly. "Post your men at the doors and windows, for he may manage to escape."

They searched everywhere fruitlessly, until every nook and cranny in the basement and first floor had been gone over. They then passed up the staircase and searched the bedrooms upon the upper floor until they had entered all except that of Coralie.

"This is my daughter's room," said Lavalle. "Of course it is useless for me to ask you to spare it on that account. Coralie?"

"Wait a moment, monsieur," said Lefebre. "If you will give me your word of honor that the fugitive is not in the house I will give up the search."

"I shall not do it. You should have asked me that before you had ransacked my house from cellar to garret. Oh, here is my daughter."

Coralie appeared at the door of her room and looked with astonishment at the two men, who shrunk before the flashing glance of her bright eyes.

"What do you seek here, Colonel Lefebre? This last insult was hardly necessary to make me despise you more."

"They wish to search your room, Coralie. Colonel Lefebre has so little confidence in you that he imagines you have a gentleman secreted there. Let them enter, if you please."

"Certainly. Colonel Lefebre, until this hour I have given

you credit which you did not deserve. I know that you were a bad man at heart, but I *thought* you possessed the outward marks of a gentleman. I do not think so now. The room is open and you may enter if you choose."

"Coralie," said Lefebre, wildly, "you know that I would not willingly insult you. Give me your assurance that you have not seen the man called Louis Chastellar and I will not enter your room."

"Make your own searches, sir. I do not propose to answer your insults."

"Captain Le Sabreur, you will enter that room and search it."

"Excuse me, colonel. I am not a man to stick at trifles, but, upon my word you ask too much from even such a man as I am. You must make this search yourself, or send for some of the men. I will not so degrade myself as to do it, much as I hate the man whom we now pursue."

Lefebre answered by a hoarse exclamation of rage, and, pushing past him, looked into the room. There was nothing which could have hidden a man, and the colonel withdrew, after a cursory glance.

"I beg your pardon, Mademoiselle Coralie, for what I have been forced to do. If you will give it a moment's thought, you will see that my duty was plain, and that I could do no less. *Bon soir!*"

He went down hastily, followed by Captain Le Sabreur, while Coralie and her father followed to the head of the stairway and looked after them, until they heard them withdraw the soldiers and march away. Coralie ran down and locked the doors, pushed the light bedstead aside and touched upon a part of the paneling behind the bed. A slight clicking sound was heard, a trap fell down, and Louis Chastellar stepped out.

"We have managed to get rid of them," said Lavalle, "thanks to Coralie's tongue, which touched the one sense which this man has—his sense of politeness. I am glad that he did not make a very close search, for I am far from certain he would not have discovered the door."

"For what was this constructed?"

"A hiding-place for plate and other valuables, in case of war," replied Lavalle. "Come into your room again."

"I have much to thank you for, sir, and also your noble daughter," said Chastellar. "I am poor and helpless enough now, but the time may come when even such as I may be of use to you. Oh, that I could get safely out of the city! I have work to do, and I must see the Recluse of Mont Royal."

"Why do you wish to see him?"

"That I can not tell you at present, but see him I must, at any hazard."

"You will not be able to get out of the city," said the other, gravely. "Lefebre will set a watch upon every outlet, until he is fully satisfied that you have escaped. I think you must keep quiet for a few days."

"It can not be done. Is there no one by whom you can send a message to-morrow?"

"To what place?"

"To Mont Royale."

At this moment Coralie entered the room.

"I will go myself if you really wish it, captain," said La valle. "But, I am somewhat suspected myself, and I fear that the result may be bad. But, as I have no other messenger—"

"You have one," said Coralie.

"Whom can we trust, my daughter?"

"Can you think of no one?" she said with sparkling eyes.

"I dare not trust Pierre."

"Certainly not."

"Or Jasper?"

"As bad as the other."

"Then, I can think of no one whom we dare to send."

"I can."

"Who is it?"

"I!" cried Coralie. "I will take the message to Mont Royale and give it to the Recluse. No one will stop me."

CHAPTER IX.

A DARK DEED.

NEVILLE had made his way out of the city, as we have said, taking the direction to the west, and did not pause until he reached the slope in the rear of Mont Royale, and buried himself in the forest. Here he stopped and sat down to think. He had no hesitation in promising to take the life of the Recluse, nor did he falter now, but the experience of the past night had taught him that he had no common duty to perform, and no ordinary man to deal with. To lie in wait, to creep and hide until he saw his victim and then strike him down, was the course he had marked out for himself. If he had a conscience it was so seared by a life of crime and dissipation that nothing could awaken it.

"They say that he is an old man," he muttered. "Surely he can not give me much trouble, and I care nothing for leg-erdemain and clap-trap. And then, two thousand Louis'! Ha; it is a long time since I had the chance to make two thousand Louis'. What is a human life to that, to a man like me, who believes that death is annihilation?"

He looked furtively about him, for he thought he heard a footstep stir the forest leaves. He darted behind a tree and waited, and saw the man who appeared in the first chapter of this work walking rapidly up the slope.

"Not the man I wish to see," muttered the assassin, "but, perhaps he can give me some information. I think I will risk it."

Stepping back out of sight, he made a circuit through the bushes and came out in front of the comer, meeting him face to face.

"A fair day to you, monsieur," said he, quietly. "Are you bound to Montreal?"

"Suppose that I am; what then?" said the stranger, looking at him fixedly, with a sudden look of recognition in his face. "Can I do any thing for you there?"

"No; it was merely a passing question. There is a man who lives somewhere in this forest whom I very much wish to see, and I thought if you were not a stranger here you might be able to tell me."

"I can hardly call myself a stranger here, sir," said the other. "What is the man whom you seek called?"

"The Recluse of Mont Royale."

"I know something of him," replied the other—"more, perhaps, than most men can claim to know. Do you wish to see him?"

"Yes."

"Few men desire to see him for a second time, especially if they are enemies of his."

"I am not his enemy; why do you say so?"

"I know nothing about that. If you wish to see him, you must come at eleven to-morrow to the great boulder whose top you can see through the tree-tops. I shall see him to-night and tell him your wish. And now good-day, or rather evening, for night is coming on."

He strode away, and his form was lost among the trees. Neville looked doubtfully after him.

"I am afraid I have done wrong," he said. "Suppose the two come in company, I shall have my hands full. But, at least I can watch the old man and see where he goes, if he does not come alone. Let me once earth my fox, and trust me for the rest."

Saying this he again sought the depth of the woods, and, scraping together a heap of leaves and moss, he lay down and slept as peacefully as if he had never dreamed of guilt or the shedding of blood.

At an early hour next day Coralie Lavalle was climbing the sides of Mont Royale, toward the spot where she had been sent to meet the Recluse. Her beautiful face was flushed with excitement and exercise, for hers was a soul to take delight in adventure. She had ridden out of Montreal, accompanied by a single servant, who had been left with the horses at the foot of the mountain, while she went on alone. After a difficult walk she reached the summit, and paused for breath before she proceeded further. When she had rested, she approached a boulder which lay half buried in the earth, and, taking

away a few loose stones, which lay near the base, she produced a conch-shell, upon which she sounded, three times, in a peculiar manner, and then sat down to wait. Ten minutes after, without any warning of his approach, the Recluse stood beside her, looking at her mildly.

"You here?" he said. "Who taught you the signal which calls me from my resting-place?"

"Captain Louis Chastellar," replied Coralie. "I will tell you how it happened."

And she recounted the events of the past night and the danger which Louis had escaped.

"And you saved him?" he said, his voice losing the harsh tone which characterized it, and becoming soft and sweet as a woman's. "You were a friend to that true-hearted young man, one of the few friends who remain for me? Child, the outcast and the homeless man thanks you from the depths of a long tried and sorrowing heart. May your life be very happy, and those who come after you bless you for your noble deeds."

"I do not deserve it, sir," she said softly, "but, I am glad to have earned your good opinion."

"Why were you sent to me?" he asked.

"To bring you a message," was the reply; "Louis Chastellar sends it."

She took a paper from her bosom and gave it to him. He read it carefully twice, and then tore it into fragments and scattered them to the winds.

"You have only to say to Louis that it shall be done; he may depend upon me. He will understand what I mean when I say "Rue Notre Dame; twelve o'clock—to-night. Can you remember the message?"

"Yes."

"And now, a word for yourself, my child. I have seen you in the company of that specious villain, Colonel Lefebvre. I have warned you against him before, and I repeat my warning now. Avoid him as you would a pestilence. There is no villainy so great, no deed so evil, that he would not be guilty of it. His heart is a mine of bad thoughts, mask it as he may under the cloak of a handsome face and smooth exterior."

"Colonel Lefebre and I are no longer friends," she said ; "on the contrary, we are now open enemies. Let me warn *you* against him, for his rage against you is some thing terrible. He would do any thing to destroy you."

"I have no fear of him, my child. It is not written in the book of fate that he is to conquer. No, I will fight the battle to the end and win at last, in spite of his machinations. One thing more ; I know the mission you have set out to perform and in the end you shall succeed. I say to you—hope. The darkest hour is just before the dawn of day. What is that ?"

They listened intently but only heard the sighing of the wind among the trees.

"I could almost have sworn I heard a step. Abah !"

The Moor, who had been standing unobserved behind a boulder, showed himself for a moment, and it required a great effort on the part of Coralie to keep down a cry of fear.

"My good Abah is not handsome to look at, but he is true as steel," said the Recluse. "Keep good watch, Abah, for I thought I heard a sound just now."

The Moor disappeared immediately, and nothing more was heard. The Recluse took from his bosom a packet of small size, which he placed in Coralie's hand.

"Inclosed is something which you will be glad to have. As a favor to me you must ask no questions, but keep the packet and read the writing upon the inside of the paper when you reach home. In the hour of your greatest trial, when nothing else can save you, come or send to me here, and give the signal, and if I live you shall have help. Farewell, and do not forget my message to Louis : Rue Notre Dame ; twelve o'clock—to-night."

He offered his hand, and she took it and pressed it reverently to her lips. The next moment he was gone, and hiding the packet in her bosom, she began the descent of the mountain. Half-way down she paused and looked back. The bluff upon which they had been standing was in full view, and, as she turned, she saw the Recluse standing alone beneath the great boulder looking at her. The silent majesty of his figure, as he stood resting upon his staff, was not with-

out its effect upon her, and as she gazed she saw something which filled her with horror. A man had crept to the top of the boulder, directly above the head of the Recluse, and she saw him stoop and raise a great stone above his head, as if about to launch it at the immovable figure of the old man. At that distance it was impossible for her to make her voice reach the Recluse, but, she cried out and waved her hand, but he made no sign to indicate that he noticed the gesture. Just then the stone came crashing down upon the head of the Recluse, and the figure staggered, and fell to the depths of the ravine through the tree-top, a hundred feet below.

The terrible tragedy was scarcely enacted, when another as fearful took place. Coralie saw the dark form of Abah spring upon the rock and seize Neville, for it was that villain who had done the deed—in the grasp of his strong arms. A terrible struggle now took place—one which she remembered to her dying day. The two, unable to retain their footing upon the boulder, slipped down to the platform below, locked in a death-grapple. Although not so strong as his antagonist, Neville was an iron-limbed man, and was fighting for his life.

Twice he attempted to draw a knife, but, it was under the muscular arm of Abah, and he could not draw it from its sheath. His ribs seemed to crack beneath the terrible pressure of those mighty arms, but he fought on fiercely, despairingly, keeping off his fate as long as he could. The man, though a villain, was a brave one, and he had determined to sell his life dearly. Twice they stumbled upon the dizzy verge, and as often Neville dragged himself away from it, forcing his adversary backward, in spite of his giant strength. At last, Abah tore his feet from the earth and dashed him with terrible violence upon the rocky platform, depriving him of consciousness, and stood with his heavy foot upon his breast, and a glittering knife in his hand.

“Would he kill him?” Coralie covered her face with her hands, and shut out the horrible sight. She knew that the villain deserved any death, but, something told her that he was only an instrument in the hands of another for the commission of this crime. She looked again, and saw that Abah had replaced the knife in his belt and was engaged in binding the fallen man hand and foot. When this was done he

raised the senseless body easily, and seemed about to cast it into the ravine, but he did not. Throwing the body across his shoulder like a sack, he stepped lightly up the rocks, and disappeared.

He was gone but a few moments, when Coralie saw him again, making his way down the rocks toward her. There was nothing to be learned from his face, which was set like marble, but her fear for the Recluse conquered her dread of his servant, and she ran to meet him.

"Why do you not go to find your master? Oh, it was a horrible, a wicked deed. Can you not speak?"

He shook his head slowly.

"You claim to love your master," she cried, angrily; "will you let him lie there, a prey to the wolves? Go, I say, and find him, for he may be living yet."

Abah silently pointed toward the distant city. "Do you mean that I must go?" she said.

He nodded slowly, and still pointed.

"Your master gave me a message. Am I to tell Louis what has happened?"

Again he shook his head.

"Your master can not come to him."

Abah pointed to his own breast and taking her by the shoulder, with an angry gesture, again indicated, by that same motion, that she must go, and at once. The expression of his dark face was so forbidding that she did not dare to stay, but hurried away as fast as she could. Looking back, she saw that Abah was already making his way toward the ravine, but, walking slowly as if in no great haste. What could this mean in one who had shown complete subjection to the will of his master, and a species of savage love for him?

She found the servant with the horses and rode away at her best speed, and entered the city. As she approached her father's house, she was conscious that a strong guard was posted in front of the door, under the leadership of Captain Le Sabreur, who bowed low as she passed in, without saying a word. She hurried in, and, as she passed through the hall, the door of the library opened, and Colonel Lefebre came out, followed by three soldiers having Chastellar in custody.

"You see that we were not mistaken after all," said Lef-

bre, with an ironical composure. "You will know what it is to attempt to measure swords with me."

"You see this man," said the prisoner, "this man, who claimed to be my friend, and who now gives me up to death. Do not waste sympathy upon me, mademoiselle. I feel that Heaven is too good to let me suffer for the crime of another."

"Silence," cried Lefebre.

"This good man, this gallant soldier was overwhelmed with grief because I had been so wicked," said Chastellar, "but, he feels it his duty—his *duty*, look you—to give me up to justice."

A word with you, Colonel Lefebre, before you take this gentleman to prison," said Coralie. "Will you step into this room?"

"See to him, guards," said the colonel. "If he attempts to escape, do your duty and keep him, dead or alive. Now, mademoiselle, I am at your service."

He followed her into an empty room and closed the door.

"I wish you to set this brave young man free," she said.

"I can not do it," he said, sullenly.

"You must; it is for your interest to do so."

"I can not make it appear so," replied the colonel.

"Then take him if you will, but as I live you will be under arrest in three days time upon a charge of sending a man to murder the old man known as the Recluse of Mont Royal."

He turned ghastly pale, and looked at her with trembling lips.

"It is false; how dare you accuse me of such a crime?"

"It is true as heaven, and you know it. I need say no more. Is there any open accusation against Louis Chastellar? Does any one know him except yourself?"

"Only one."

"And who is that?"

"Le Sabreur."

"One of your creatures, whom you can easily silence. I will say no more now, but leave it to you whether you will dare to stand against the accusation which I can bring against you."

"What witnesses have you?"

" You shall know that, if you dare to stand the trial, but I warn you."

He stood for a moment in silence, nervously tapping the hilt of his sword, and looking upon the ground. The bold accusation had taken him completely by surprise. How much or how little she knew he could not tell, nor would she confess it.

" Do you tell me that this old wretch is dead ?" he said at last.

" Your villainous accomplice performed the deed but too well," she said. " But, he is in a condition to witness against you, and will do it to save his life. Be careful what you do, colonel ; I am not speaking at random."

" I am glad that this gray-haired villain is dead," said Lefebre ; " but, you accuse me wrongfully. I am not guilty of this crime."

" False ! Prove to the marquis that you are not, against the witnesses whom I shall bring."

" How can I account for it, if I let the prisoner go ?"

" Your fertile brains can surely conceive a way. You find yourself mistaken in the man, or something of that kind. Choose your own way."

" Will you wait here until I speak with Le Sabreur ?"

" Certainly."

He left the room and called his bully apart and conversed with him in low tones for some moments. Le Sabreur appeared excited, but, in the end, his scruples were quelled, and something passed from hand to hand. It was not money of course. Colonel Lefebre could not have been so corrupt as to bribe one of the captains of France.

" You understand me, then ?" whispered the colonel.

" Oh yes ; we shall find a way to deal with him when your other work is done."

" They entered the house together, and approached the prisoner.

" Captain," said Lefebre, " as you seem to be in some doubt as to the identity of this prisoner, look at him well. Is he the one who assaulted you at the Three Lilies ?"

Le Sabreur looked at him keenly, and returned a negative answer.

"Any of the officers can tell you that the man with whom I fought had a handsome saber-cut across his face which this gentleman has not."

"Then we have been mistaken," said Lefebre, coolly. "Young sir, I beg your pardon for disturbing you, and you are at liberty. I would ask to be better acquainted with you if I did not think that, in the present disturbed state of Montreal, strangers will not be at ease in it. You had better leave the city as soon as possible. Captain, withdraw your men, and take them to the barracks."

Coralie stood in the doorway looking on while this comedy was enacted. Chastellar was surprised at the turn affairs had taken but was not inclined to quarrel with his good luck.

"I am doubtless indebted to the lady for this," he said, turning to Lefebre, "for I know that you never relented of your own free will."

"You may be certain of that, traitor and spy. I give you two days in which to get safely out of Montreal, and at the end of that time if you are found, you die."

And turning on his heel, with a look of fiendish hate upon his face, he left the house, and Coralie gave both hands to the man she had saved, while his handsome face lighted up with a look before which she cast down her eyes, while a carnation tint dyed her cheeks.

CHAPTER X.

IN A TRAP.

IT was after eleven that night when Chastellar, disguised by the use of a long cloak and wide-brimmed hat, stole out of Lavalle's house by the rear entrance and made his way through the silent streets. To the patrols whom he met he gave the word of the night, which he had received from Lavalle, and was enabled to pass in safety. After a half hour's rapid walk he reached a secluded part of the street of Notre Dame and stopped before a small house which lay wrapped in complete

darkness. Looking cautiously about him, in order to satisfy himself that he was not watched, he approached the door and tapped softly in a peculiar manner. The door was at once opened for him, and closed noiselessly. He found himself in a small dark hall. The sound of bolts shooting into their sockets followed, and then a hand clasped his and led him forward. Another door was opened and a voice said :

"Stand quiet until I get a light, Louis. We must be careful."

A lamp was quickly lighted, and showed a small, plainly furnished room, the only window of which was guarded by a strong wooden shutter. The man who held the lamp was the same who had directed Neville where to find the Recluse, the night before.

"I was afraid you would not come, Louis," he said. "I doubt you have been in trouble since I saw you last."

"I have been," said Louis. "That foul villain, Le Sabreur, recognized me, and set his hounds upon me, and I escaped by the aid of Coralie Lavalle. "Ah, *she* is not changed even if you and I are."

"The same noble girl as ever. Did she suspect you?"

"Not at all. I have been strangely tempted to tell her, but, for your sake, I did not do it. It was hard to hold her hand in mine, to look into her sweet face, and keep silent; very, very hard."

"The time is very near now," said the stranger. "Montcalm will be in the city in two days, and the proofs are already in his hands. Doubt not that he will do us justice, for, though a stern soldier, he knows how to be just."

"I must tell you that Lefebre caught me this afternoon, but Coralie prevailed upon him—how I do not know—to make Le Sabreur deny that he knew me."

"The girl is shrewd," said the other, quietly. "She has her mother's face, a perfect copy. I can not rest until all is accomplished. What is it, Abu?"

The Moor pointed silently to the window-blind, and the stranger sprung forward and threw it suddenly open—so suddenly indeed that a man whose face was pressed closely against the panes outside had no time to withdraw, and they saw that it was Le Sabreur! The next moment he vanished in the darkness.

"A thousand curses light upon his spying head, Louis: He has tracked you to the house, and we are in danger. Away, both of you, to the place you know, for it will not be long before he will return."

He opened a narrow door at the end of the room and hurried them through, following them quickly, and taking the lamp with him. Ten minutes had hardly passed, when a party of soldiers surrounded the house, and both Le Sabreur and the colonel were with them. Their rap at the door was unanswered, and, after some delay, it was broken in and the guard poured into the little hall.

"You are sure you have marked the house, captain?" said Lefebre. "These hovels look so much alike that you might easily be mistaken."

"There is no mistake, colonel; I earthed the fellow here."

"Where is Neville?"

"Here," said that worthy, coming forward. He walked feebly, and seemed to be in pain, and, indeed, he had not yet recovered from his encounter with Abah.

"Would you know this man who told you where to meet the Recluse if you saw him again?"

"Yes."

"Describe the person you saw, Le Sabreur."

The captain did so, and a sort of shudder passed through the frame of the colonel.

"Is *that* the man?" he said.

"The very same!"

"If the dead could rise from their graves I might say I knew him too," murmured the colonel. "Have you lighted that torch yet, Darnay? You tremble as if you feared to meet the sprite who calls himself the Recluse of Mont Royale."

"He has good reason to fear it," said the same voice which they knew so well, and which had terrified Neville and Lefebre on the night when they plotted the death of the Recluse. "The dead *do* come out of their graves to confound such villains. Murderers, beware!"

The half-lighted torch dropped from the sergeant's hand, and was extinguished upon the floor. An uncertain murmur, a strange, vibrating, hollow sound filled the house, and the stoutest held their breath.

"Demons or spirits, whatever you may be, come out and face me. I defy you and all your arts," shrieked Lefebre.

"Dare you defy us?" cried the same voice. "The earth gapes for you; darkness is round about you—and you shall die in your sins."

"Give me a torch," cried Lefebre. "Forward all, and the first one who falters I will cleave to the chin. Search the house, and let nothing escape you. Le Sabreur, remember that neither of these men is to be taken alive."

One of the men at the door brought a torch and Lefebre led the way, a naked sword in his right hand. They dashed into the little room which the three men had left so shortly before, but, no one was in sight. The sounds had ceased and the spirit of the leader began to encourage the rest. Only Neville was trembling like an aspen.

"Fool!" hissed Lefebre in his ear. "I tell you that these men we seek saw you do the deed. You are doomed if they escape."

"That old man's face will never leave me," whispered Neville. "I see it every moment, and hear his hollow voice. It was he who spoke just now."

"Open that door, Darnay," cried Lefebre, "and see where it leads to."

The sergeant threw open the small door, before mentioned and looked down.

"It seems to be a cellar-way," he said, looking back.

"We have trapped them, then," said Lefebre. "Come forward with your bayonets and support us. Draw your sword, Neville, and use it as you know how. These men will fight for their lives."

The whole party crowded into the cellar-way, Neville, Lefebre and the captain in advance, while the soldiers followed with leveled bayonets. They were all upon the frail stairway when it suddenly gave way and the party fell in a confused heap to the bottom of the cellar. In the confusion the lights went out, and cries of pain, oaths, and groans filled the place. Of course so many persons holding weapons in their hands and dropping together, could not fall without hurting some one, and in their terror, imagining themselves attacked, many blows were struck before Lefebre could quiet them.

"This is capital," he said. "Now, who is hurt?"

A chorus of voices answered, among which was heard that of Le Sabreur declaring that his leg was broken and bewailing the hour that led him to interfere in the affairs of other men.

"Keep silent, you blockhead," said the colonel, almost beside himself with rage. "Pick up your torch and see if you can light it, sergeant."

It was useless, for the last spark went out as the sergeant lifted it.

"Jump up there, and get a light from the first patrol you can find," said Lefebre.

The sergeant groped about in the thick darkness until his hands touched the sill of the door above, and, as he grasped it to swing himself up, something fell upon his fingers with such force as to draw a howl of pain from him, followed by a volley of French blasphemy not necessary to put down here. The sound of a closing door followed, and bolts shot into their sockets.

"We are trapped," cried the colonel. "By all the devils in hell, those who have done this shall dearly rue it. Open the door there; let us out of this, or suffer the consequences."

A mocking laugh was the only reply, and the sound of hammer and nails succeeded.

"They are nailing up the door, colonel," roared Le Sabreur. "Shout, all together and perhaps the patrol may hear us."

They shouted in vain, for the walls and floors were double, and no sound could penetrate them.

"What shall we do?" said Lefebre, in a tone of blank dismay.

"There is nothing for us but to take our imprisonment as coolly as we can, and wait for morning," replied the sergeant.

"Ten thousand devils! In the mean time, they will escape."

"Doubtless; we are dealing with some very cunning persons, mon colonel. I doubt they will prove too much for us in the end. You should have left a guard at the door."

"We should have been all right if the accursed staircase had not broken down," replied the colonel, angrily. "Search

about, and see if you can find nothing to batter in the door."

The whole party set to work, groping about upon the floor of the cellar, but their search was in vain. The men who had trapped them knew their business too well to suffer themselves to be caught easily.

"This is the work of the devil," hissed the colonel. "Death to those who have done it, when I once get out of this trap."

"Man of blood," cried the voice which they had heard before, "out of the earth in which your victims lie they cry aloud for vengeance. Where is Louise Vernay, where is her husband, the man whom you betrayed?"

"I did not kill them," shrieked the unhappy man. "It is false; she destroyed herself."

"Destroyed herself? Yes! she preferred the refuge of the grave to dishonor. But, who forced her to seek that refuge, if not Lefebvre?"

"It is false! Man or spirit, whoever you may be, I defy you! I loved Louise Vernay before he ever saw her; she was to have been my wife, but *he* came between us."

"Liar! She chose for herself and distinguished him by the gift of her love. From that hour you worked in secret, until you drove him to his death. Then, when you had robbed her of all she held dear, you followed her still, until she gave up the struggle and died. Where is the Recluse of Mont Royale, your last victim?"

"I—I know nothing of him."

"Ask the trembling coward by your side if that is true. Walter Neville, stand forth and answer: Did you kill the old man upon the slope of Mont Royale?"

"No, no!" screamed the guilty wretch. "It was not my fault. He fell into the chasm by accident."

"False! your hand laid him low and you were hired to do the deed by that supreme villain by your side. Behold your victim!"

A sort of door opened above them, and there, standing in a blaze of light, was the figure of the Recluse of Mont Royale, leaning upon his staff! A ghastly paleness was upon his face and his forehead was clotted with gore. One hand was out.

stretched, pointing at the shrinking figure of Neville, while the other grasped the staff. Then the vision faded, and Neville was down upon his face upon the cold earth, senseless as the clay on which he rested.

CHAPTER XI.

WHO WAS GEHARDO?

CORALIE had opened the packet given her by the Recluse and found that it contained a miniature, which she looked at long and intently. A beautiful face, the face of a woman in the bloom of her youth and beauty, bearing a wonderful resemblance to Coralie.

The face came back to her, as she had seen it long ago, and she did not need to read the paper which was wrapped about the picture to tell her that this was the face of her mother!

She kissed the miniature and took up the paper which had enfolded it. If her mother was dead, after all? If this speaking face would never look at her again? The first words she read confirmed her fears: .

“Your mother, an angel on earth is an angel in heaven now. Bow down to her as to a saint, for she suffered much. I who tell you this have much to do before I can tell you all. I only say, wait, and hope. THE RECLUSE.”

She bowed her head upon the table and burst into tears. Half her mission was accomplished, for she had sought her mother and found only a grave, long green.

Louis had asked her not to retire before his return. He came back about two o'clock, and entered the house by means of a pass-key and came at once to the library.

“I have only a moment to pass with you,” he said; “but I could not go away until I had seen you again. Lefebre is upon my track; I have managed to escape by the aid of two constant friends. If I can keep clear of him for two days all will be well, but I dare not stay here.”

“It is better that you should go,” she said, softly; “and,

though we part from you sadly, it must be borne. Why is it that I seem to know you so well, and why is your face as that of one I knew long ago?"

He averted his face for a moment.

" You have a good reason for it," he said. " I can not tell you now, because my name and fame must be cleared in the eyes of all men as well as in yours, before I declare myself. But, that does not alter the fact that I love you, and my one hope is to make myself worthy of you."

Her head was bent low, but he took her hand in his, and, raising her head by gentle force, looked into her eyes. They gave him a great hope, and he stooped and kissed her.

" Trust in me, my darling," he said. " Have no fear of Lefebre or his villains, for eyes are watching him of whom you do not dream. Farewell, but you shall see me again soon."

He again pressed his lips to hers and was gone, and she retired to her room.

Next day she ordered her horse and rode out, and, as she passed the southern barrier of the city, she met a party of scouts coming in, who had a prisoner among them—the Indian, Gehardo—with his hands bound behind him, and a gash upon his forehead from the cut of a sword. She knew the sergeant in command, Darnay, and asked him whom they had taken.

" A spy, mademoiselle," said the man, touching his cap. " We took him just inside the barrier on his way out of the city."

" How do you know him to be a spy?"

" Because he has a white skin under his paint," replied the man, " and uses his fists as no Indian ever used them yet. Behold him!"

The man parted the calico upon the arm of the prisoner and revealed a skin as white as a woman's. At this moment the prisoner raised his head and looked intently at Coralie; she reeled in her saddle, for the eyes which looked at her were those of Louis Chastellar!

" How did you take him, sergeant?" she controlled herself sufficiently to ask.

" Why, Madame Lemoine was riding past the barrier, and

her horse took fright at a chance pistol shot and tried to run. This spy was passing, and ran to help her, and stopped the horse, but, in doing it, he tore the calico on his shoulder and I saw his white skin. I had to take him, of course, though I hated to do it, under the circumstances."

"It is too bad to capture a man who would have escaped but for such a deed as that! You had better let him escape, sergeant."

"I wish I dared, mademoiselle, but I should be shot before the whole garrison if I did. No, he must take his chances. Confound him, he knocked over two of my best men before he was taken, and if he had a weapon, I don't believe we should have taken him. *Bon jour*, mademoiselle; I must go on, or one of the officers may see us, and you would not like to get a poor fellow into trouble."

They marched on toward the barracks, and Coralie, after riding a short distance, turned back after them, sick at heart. Louis taken, after all he had undergone, captured on the eve of his triumph! She blamed him for disguising himself, and being taken inside a garrisoned post in that garb. She knew that Lefebre, had he been ever so much inclined to do so, dared not set him at liberty without a trial, and the days of grace he had given were over.

A few paces further on she was met by a soldier, who halted and addressed her.

"I am ordered by Colonel Lefebre to see you safely to your house," he said.

"I do not need your escort, and so you may tell the colonel," she answered.

The man made no reply, but fell into the rear, keeping her in sight until she reached the house, and she was not surprised to find Lefebre there.

"I am forced to bring you unwelcome intelligence, mademoiselle. A deep-laid scheme is on foot in the interest of the English to betray Montreal, and your father and yourself are implicated. You must consider yourself under arrest and retire to your room. A guard will be placed at your door, but otherwise you will be put to no inconvenience."

She looked at him scornfully for she saw in this only another plot to annoy her.

"Are you aware that the gentleman whom you arrested in this house has again been taken, and is now on his way to prison, sir?"

"I am glad to hear it. Having foolishly set him free once, it is hardly to be expected that I should do so a second time."

"Yet I demand his liberty."

"And your demand is refused. Your absurd charge against me is without foundation, and if Louis Chastellar is taken, he dies before two days are passed."

"You dare not murder him, for your life."

"Ah; we will see. I do not intend to bandy words with a prisoner, and you may as well retire."

"What charges do you bring against me?"

"That shall be explained, in due season. Will you retire to your room, or must I call a guard?"

"Such an insult is not necessary, Colonel Lefebre. I leave you, but you shall find that I have not threatened in vain."

She went to her room, and a guard was posted at the door.

"So, so; she is safe," muttered Lefebre. "Neville must now do his part."

Walter Neville had not yet quite recovered from the terrible fright of the night before, and appeared before the colonel pale and haggard. The party had remained cooped up in the cellar of the house into which they had forced themselves until morning gave them light sufficient to break their way out, which they did with infinite difficulty. Of course they found the birds flown, but Lefebre sent special guards outside the different barriers with orders to arrest any suspicious persons who might pass that way. In this manner Louis had again fallen into the hands of his enemies.

"Why do you come to me with such a face as that, Neville?" said the colonel, furiously. "Must I find wit and courage for all my men?"

"But, you saw him!" said Neville. "Such a sight as that might unnerve any man."

"It seems to have done your business, effectually. I think I must find another agent."

"No, no," said Neville. "Give me work to do. I must keep busy or that horrible vision will not keep out of my head. What must I do now?"

Lefebre whispered in his ear, and the man nodded slowly.

"It shall be done, sir," he said. "Any thing to kill time."

In an hour Louis Chastellar was in the strong room of the Citadel prison, heavily ironed and with little hope of escape. He knew his captor well enough to be certain that little time would elapse from the time of his seizure to his execution. Lefebre had hated him before—he feared him now, as one of the probable witnesses against him in case his share of the guilt in the murder of the Recluse was brought to the proof. Coralie had seen him, however, and knew his peril. She had saved him before—would she be able to do it now?

That question was soon answered, for the heavy door swung open, and Lefebre was admitted, alone. At a signal the only outlet was closed and locked behind him, and he stood looking with a fierce glance at the unfortunate young prisoner, who returned his look by one of haughty defiance.

"This is your work, Lefebre," he said. "I might have known you would not keep your word to me."

"Bah, you are a fool, Louis. You always were a fool, you know, even when I claimed to be your friend, or you would not have believed that I could be friendly to a man who, younger than I, was rapidly outstripping me in my own branch of the service. You have run your head into the lion's jaws; let us see you get it out."

"The jaws of a wolf, if you will, not a lion. Many an ass has tried to wear the lion's hide and failed, Lefebre. The ears will show themselves."

"You know what to expect, it seems," said Lefebre. "You can not hope for mercy, after that insult."

"I do not expect it," was the quiet reply. "You may kill me, but, from my ashes shall arise a phoenix which shall make you tremble! False friend, false lover, false to every good and true thing, your triumph will be a short one. You do not dream what a thunderbolt is hanging over your head."

"I care not," replied Lefebre. "So that I have my revenge, let what will come. As for you, to-morrow you shall die."

"What; without trial?"

"I hold a standing order from the marquis to execute you whenever you may be found. If that were not enough, you were taken as a spy, lurking in the city, and I might make

you die the death of a spy if I chose. I prefer to have you shot."

"Thank you. It is the first favor you have shown me, and I shall at least die a soldier's death, not the death of a dog. Why do you stay here? I have had enough of you."

"I know what you have hoped to do, Louis Chastellar, but your hope is in vain. You depend upon the Recluse to crush me after you are gone. He is dead and rotting, and I have nothing to fear from him."

"Dead! When did he die?"

"Yesterday morning."

A strange look passed over the face of the prisoner.

"Yes, and his spirit appeared to you last night. Fear him yet, villain, for his ghost has more power to harm you than any other being which treads the earth alive. Go!"

"I am going. But, let me tell you one thing, Louis. The woman you love, whom you have watched in secret for ten years, as she grew up from childhood to womanhood, is in my power, and nothing earthly shall prevent her being my wife."

"You dare not harm her, black-hearted as you are. Heaven will not suffer so great a wickedness as that."

"Heaven suffers many things to come to pass which look bad in the eyes of men," sneered the colonel. "I bid you good-day, and go to call a council of officers to doom you to death."

The door clanged behind him, and Louis was alone in his prison, waiting for his doom. A few hours passed, and the door opened again to admit a Jesuit priest, who extended his hands in benediction over the head of the prisoner.

"My son," he said. "I have come to announce to you that your fate is fixed, and to prepare you for the world to come."

"A soldier should always be prepared for the last change, my father," said the young man. "I am ready to die, if it is God's will."

"I am pleased to find you in this humble frame of mind. You will be shot to death to-morrow, in sight of the garrison; but, before you go, make your peace with God, and confess your sins."

"My sins are many, father, and I will confess them to God in prayer."

"But, the crime for which you die—"

"I never committed. I will not die with a lie in my mouth, and I tell you here, before God, that I am as guiltless of this sin as you are."

"My son, confession is good for the soul. As your priest I ask you to repent and tell me by what sorcery you were led to turn traitor to France and take bribes of her enemies."

"If any except a priest had said what you say now, and my hands were free, I would cram the lie down his throat. As it is, your profession protects you."

"Your heart has been hardened more than I had thought, my son. I have here written a confession, to save time, saying that you are guilty. Sign your name to it."

"Dare you degrade a noble calling by asking me to do that, priest? Offer me that paper if you dare! No, false priest, I can die, but at least I will die with honor in my heart. Lefebre has sent you here to tempt me, but he does not know me. Away, before I forget what you are, and strike you."

"The curse of the church hangs over you if you refuse to sign," cried the priest.

"Let it fall, then, for I will not do myself this great dishonor!"

The priest started up suddenly and came forward, and the prisoner, stretching out his manacled hands, caught him by the beard and gave it a tug. As he had supposed, the beard came off, and revealed the visage of Walter Neville!

"Ha, ha, ha! you a priest, good friend Neville. Out, before I brain you with my handcuffs!"

Neville uttered a savage curse, and, catching up his beard, sprung out and closed the door behind him, putting on the beard as he went. The mocking laughter of the young prisoner followed him.

In one of the lower rooms he found Lefebre waiting.

"Has he signed it?" he cried, eagerly.

"Not he! He has detected me, tore the beard from my face and laughed at me."

"Curse him! But, it does not matter. After he is dead, they may blame me if they will. With him and this accursed Recluse out of the way, I have nothing to fear."

"Why will you speak of him?" whispered the lesser villain. "I know that he is dead; I know that I killed him, but, his face will not leave me."

"You escaped by a miracle. What do you suppose the black would have done with you if you had not slipped the buckle and escaped?"

"I should be a dead man now," replied Neville, sullenly. "What is to be done with old Lavalle?"

"Leave him under guard. You have nothing to do with him whatever. Come out into the street."

They left the building and walked out into the main thoroughfare of the growing city. Crowds of men were passing to and fro; groups of civilians and soldiers were talking at corners, and market-men and half-breeds loitered carelessly about. Wherever the two went, one of the half-breeds followed at a distance. If they had looked at him they would have seen something in his eye which boded no good to them.

CHAPTER XII.

CORALIE ENSNARED.

CORALIE was a prisoner—the prisoner of Colonel Lefebre.

She knew that her lover was in danger, and that the charge against her was trumped up to keep her out of the way, and to throw doubt upon any testimony she might give against her enemy. Her father was also a prisoner in his room, and the only known friends of Louis Chastellar were thus disposed of.

She tried to escape, but every movement was watched. Even the windows were guarded, and the man at her door had orders to see that she did not leave the room, nor communicate with any one outside.

Night came and found her still a prisoner. The night was half gone when there was an alarm in the upper part of the house, and the guard ran down to report that she had escaped,

how, no one knew. Captain Le Sabreir received the report calmly and went up to look at the room. The evidences of a struggle were plainly manifest, the furniture was in disorder, and Coralie was gone.

"You may stay in the house," said the captain, "and I will go down and report to the colonel."

There was a lurking smile upon the face of the duelist. It was evident that he knew more of the escape than he cared to say, and that it did not take him by surprise. Leaving the house at once, he went down to see the colonel, with whom he had a short interview and then came back to withdraw all the guards except a sergeant and one private, left in charge of Lavalle. Their plans had succeeded but too well, and they had nothing to fear from the old man.

Had Coralie indeed escaped?

She had remained quietly in her room until called to the window by a low tapping sound. Pushing the sash aside, she saw the face of a man close to hers.

"If you would escape," he whispered, "I will aid you. The guard has been drugged, and the way is open."

"Who sent you to me?"

"A friend of Louis Chastellar, and your friend as well. He desires your help in setting the prisoner free."

Coralie could think of nothing worse than to remain a prisoner in the hands of Lefebre, and she determined to take the proffered aid. At a word from the man she stepped out upon the balcony, where she found a ladder of ropes, by means of which he had ascended. In a moment she was upon the pavement, and he was beside her.

"Follow me," he whispered. "In ten minutes you will be with your friends."

She followed without a word, and he led her away from the principal streets into a secluded quarter of the town.

"Where are you taking me?" she said, pausing as if hesitating to follow further.

"We are almost there," he said. "Turn back, if you prefer to trust to the tender mercies of Lefebre."

"Go on," she said. "Nothing can be worse than that."

A short distance further on she stopped again, and declared that she would go no further.

"Do you wish to destroy the man who trusted in you?" he demanded. "I tell you that it is all right and you have nothing to fear."

While she yet hesitated, he was joined by another man, who came out of an alley-way close at hand. The last man carried something across his arm which looked like a cloak. Being unwrapped, it proved to be one of those hooded cloaks worn by French women of the lower class.

"They wait for you," said the last man. "Put this on, lady, and make haste."

She pushed him aside and uttered a single scream, but, before she could repeat it, the cloak was thrown over her head, muffling her cries, and she was lifted in strong arms and carried rapidly down the alley from which the last man had come. Shortly after a door was opened and closed after them, and the man who carried her set her down.

"Help me, Neville," he whispered. "She struggles like the devil."

"You may as well be quiet," hissed a voice. "You are in a trap and no help can come to you."

The cloak was thrown off and she found herself standing in a narrow, dimly-lighted hall, held fast by two men, one of whom was Walter Neville. He was laughing over the success of his plot, and exulting in her agony.

"Out of the frying-pan and into the fire," he said. "This way, my lady. Now, do not struggle, my dear; you only waste your strength for naught."

Half led, half dragged, she was forced to move forward up a narrow stairs, and into a room without windows, and but a single door. The chamber was luxuriously furnished throughout.

"The colonel has prepared a beautiful cage for his fine bird," said Neville. "Make yourself at home, lady, and excuse us if we leave you somewhat abruptly."

"Do not leave me," gasped Coralie, seizing him by the arm. "In the name of your mother, I charge you not to leave me here alone."

He shook off her grasp, roughly, and sprung from the room, followed by his companion, and she heard the clatter of bolts and bars and knew that she was a more hopeless prisoner than

ever. What would be her fate, and for what purpose had she been brought to this place?

Her doubts were soon changed to certainty. She heard the bolts withdrawn, and, a moment after, Lefebre came in and closed the door behind him. She uttered a cry of horror, and sprung away, placing a table between herself and her enemy.

"Can you give me no better reception than that, my dear girl," he said. "You really ought to be thankful to me for putting you so completely out of danger."

"Why was I brought here, Colonel Lefebre? I demand that you return me to my father's instantly."

"I regret to be obliged to refuse a lady's request," said he, with a sneer, "but that is impossible. Coralie, you have trampled on my love, insulted me, accepted every vile report against me, until you have driven me to despair. I love you still, in spite of all you have done, and would make you my wife with joy, if you will consent."

"Coward; you insult me, as I am your prisoner."

"Is the offer of my love an insult?" demanded Lefebre.

"Yes; the deadliest insult you could offer. Let me go free, and you may not have cause to repent it."

"Have your own way, hard-hearted girl. You have spoken the death-sentence of one you love, for, while he lives, there is no hope for me. When the morning comes, and you hear the march of troops, and the sound of the muffled drum, you will know that Louis Chastellar is going out to his death."

"It will be a foul murder, for he is innocent."

"Grant that he is, no one can prove it save myself. I have in my possession proofs of that innocence, and could set him free in an hour. I will do it now, if you will promise to marry me. Having done that I know that you will keep your word."

"I will not do it. Go and do your work, unnatural man, but you shall not triumph long."

"In this prison you shall stay until you consent to be my wife. In Montreal I am absolute, and you shall find it so. Come this way."

He opened a small panel in the wall, which had served to hide a single thick pane of glass commanding a view of the extensive plain in the rear of the city.

"When you hear the drum," he said, "look from this window and you will see a sight which will please you, the execution of a criminal. And remember that you are completely in my power, and no other man shall possess you, if I kill you with my own hand."

He turned and left the room, locking the door securely, and Coralie Lavalle was alone, waiting for the coming of the morning, which was to bring such great evil upon her and hers. The threats of Lefebvre had been spoken calmly and were those of a man who had considered his course and meant to keep his word.

Morning came, bright and beautiful. She pushed aside the panel and looked out. The house in which she was placed was isolated; all that was in view from the window was the broad plain and beyond the lofty mountain.

A bell was tolling in a spire, near at hand—slow, solemn notes, pealing through the clear morning air. In the confined space in which she stood Coralie could only tell by the slight jar that followed each vibration, that the bell rung at all. It was tolling for a death—the death of Louis Chastellar!

An hour passed on, and the head of a marching column began to pass the house in which the poor girl was confined. She heard the sound of muffled drums, beating a dead march, and then the first horseman came in view, leading the column. With measured steps and downcast heads marched the soldiers of France, marshaling a brother soldier to his death. Not one among them but recognized the justice of the rule by which a spy meets his doom, as a safeguard for all armies; but they had heard of Louis Chastellar as a gallant soldier, one who had met death in many forms, but had the soul of a prince, quick to do noble deeds. They could hardly believe him guilty, and yet, the condemnation was out against him, and he must pay the forfeit.

Coralie stood with her eyes fixed upon the procession as it drew out upon the plain, waiting for the moment when he should appear. At last she saw him, marching between two files of soldiers, with erect head and haughty bearing, as if he marched to his wedding, not to his death. There was something in the curl of his proud lip, in the glance of his

speaking eye, which sent a thrill through the hearts of the spectators. While many of them believed him guilty, not one in all that crowd, except his immediate and personal enemies, but would have been glad to see him escape.

"Must I look on and see him die," gasped Coralie, clasping her hands in agony. "It is too terrible; I can not bear it."

She covered her face with her hands, and fell face downward on the sofa. But, the roll of the drum called her again to her feet, and she saw that the soldiers had formed in a hollow square, the open end facing the mountain. In the center of this open side stood the doomed man with his arms folded on his broad breast, calmly regarding the preparations. Outside the ranks of the soldiery could be seen nearly every civilian in Montreal, drawn out by so great and strange an event as this. Inside the square, just in advance of the closed end, stood the officers and staff of Colonel Lefebre, who was, for the time being, commandant in Montreal.

An officer approached with a handkerchief and seemed about to bind it upon the eyes of Chastellar, but he threw it off with a lofty gesture. And now the firing party advanced and took their stations, while the young man bent his knee a moment in prayer. Coralie saw him rise quickly, turn to Colonel Lefebre and cry out something in a manner of haughty defiance, and the colonel made an angry gesture. As he did so, Coralie saw, gleaming in the sunrays, twelve long muskets leveled at her lover's heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

LOUIS CHASTELLAR had accepted the fate in store for him bravely, and was ready when the soldiers came to lead him out to death. As he passed under the windows of the isolated stone house, little did he think that the eyes of Coralie were looking down at him, full of agony that they must behold his

death. She could understand the malice of Lefebre in placing her where she must see the execution, and the fulfillment of his plan for revenge. As they passed along the crowded streets, among many whose eyes looked compassionately at him, Louis saw the giant form of Abah, who seemed to take an extraordinary interest in the proceedings. As the cortege moved on, the Moor kept pace with them, watching him intently, but, as they left the town he suddenly disappeared.

Lefebre did not waste time. He refused to allow any dying speech upon the part of the prisoner, and gave him only a moment for prayer. When he had prayed Louis rose, and, looking fixedly at Lefebre, thundered out :

"Now, murderer, do your work."

Lefebre raised his hand, and in an instant more the soul of Louis Chastellar would have fled, but, a great tumult rose, and a man pressed into the space before the colonel, holding an open paper in his hand.

"Montcalm sends you this," he cried.

The colonel snatched the paper and read thereon three words.

"*Suspend the execution.*" Montcalm."

"Who sent this?" he cried, fiercely, turning to the messenger.

"The marquis."

"It is false, and the paper you have brought me is a forgery—a trick to save this man from death. Let the execution go on!"

"But, colonel—" began the messenger.

"Silence, man; do you come here to teach me my duty? Firing-party—to the front. Make ready—"

"This will not do, colonel," cried Erne Celestin, spurring his horse in front of his superior. "None of us will stand here and see you murder a man in opposition to Montcalm's order. Ground arms, men!"

The sergeant of the firing-party, who was from Erne's company, gave an order to the men and they grounded arms briskly, evidently glad to do so.

"Treason here, by heaven!" cried Lefebre. "Stand back, Lieutenant Erne Celestin, or you will stand beside this other traitor. Riflemen, to the front!"

The men refused to move, for the officers in command would not repeat the order. They were glad of any chance which might save the unfortunate man. While they stood in doubt, there came the clatter of hoofs, and a brilliant company of officers dashed up, and at their head rode that firm, iron-willed man who ruled so well the destinies of Canada.

The crowd parted right and left to admit him, and a cheer of delight went up from the whole assembly, who knew that, while he could be stern when occasion required, the great marquis could also be just. Lefebre turned to the firing-party and shouted to them to fire.

"*Non!*" cried Montcalm. "Attention; recover arms, soldiers."

The butts of the rifles dropped together upon the earth, and a sigh of relief broke from the breast of every soldier.

"Lieutenant Celestin, you will release the prisoner from his bonds and bring him forward."

Montcalm dismounted and every officer did the same. As they alighted, an officer in the uniform of a colonel turned a triumphant look toward Lefebre, and he saw the face of the man whom Neville had met upon the mount—Aubrey De Lambert. A cry of horror broke from his lips at the sight.

"You, you!" he cried. "Ah, then, I am doomed!"

"Yes, villain," cried De Lambert, "the man you have hunted and hounded almost to the grave, turns upon you at the last. The proofs you have so long withheld are in the hands of the marquis, and you can not escape. The doom you designed for another, you must taste."

"Not yet!" hissed the colonel, and, wheeling his horse, he dashed suddenly through the crowd, overturning them right and left, and, before a hand could be laid upon him, he was away on the plain, at full speed.

"Let him go," said Montcalm. "It is impossible for him to escape. Guards are placed at every barrier, and he will be taken. Stand forward, Walter Neville. You, a year ago a captain of Canadian irregulars, a disgraced man, doomed to death if taken, shall have no mercy. Take charge of him, Lieutenant Maurice, and lead him to prison."

Neville, heavily ironed, and pale as death, was led away by the guard.

"Captain Louis Chastellar," said Montcalm, "you had been accused of a dreadful crime, and the finding of the court was against you. It is now my pleasing duty to apologize to you for an unintentional wrong, and to restore to you the commission so nobly earned, and allot you to a company in the Twelfth regiment of Rifles, now stationed in Montreal."

"But there is no vacancy, your excellency," whispered a major.

"There will be soon. Captain Jules Le Sabreur, advance! You have been accused of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and may consider yourself under arrest. Captain Chastellar will take your company for the present. Remove him, Sergeant Darnay."

Glad to perform the duty, the sergeant advanced, followed by two files of his company, and led away the obnoxious captain.

"It now remains for me to explain to you, officers and soldiers, that this brave young man, Captain Chastellar, was the object of a deep-laid conspiracy on the part of Colonel Lefebre and a man now dead. This incorruptible spirit was in the way of their peculations of the public money, and they determined to throw their own guilt upon his shoulders. They succeeded but too well, for the open and unsuspicious nature is easily entrapped. Lefebre intrusted him with some letters to carry to a certain point, and these letters, which were upon his person when arrested, were found to be directed to various Englishmen of note, and contained information of the plans of our Generals. These letters he carried unsuspectingly, and they proved his downfall.

"The second person mentioned was shot before the army at Quebec, three days ago, as an English spy. The day before his death, he placed a sworn and witnessed statement in my hands, detailing the manner of this great villainy. I need not tell you that, immediately upon its receipt, I prepared for a sudden visit to Montreal and set measures on foot to find out the whereabouts of Captain Chastellar. Thank the saints I came in time, and now take him by the hand, a gentleman and officer, free from every stain."

A roar of delight went up from all sides, and Chastellar was the center of an excited group, eager to take him by the hand. He met them with a happy smile upon his face, and a tear in his eye.

"And now, for more of the work of this arch traitor," said Montcalm. "I am open in his condemnation, because the court-martial has acted upon his case and he is condemned. You see this gallant officer—" laying his hand upon the shoulder of the colonel, at the sight of whose face Lefebre had been so terrified—"you may not recognize him, but, when I tell you that this is the celebrated Aubrey De Lambert you will know him."

Aubrey De Lambert! Many of them remembered him, ten years before, as one of the most promising officers in the service. They hardly recognized him now, worn by privation and a sorrow which would never leave him.

"De Lambert was also condemned by a court-martial, but his punishment was simply 'dismissed from the service,' and an interdict from again setting his foot within the realms of Canada. The accusation was plotting to make himself the head of a realm, which he was to found here, and the principal witness was Lefebre and this man who died confessing his guilt. The count could not find sufficient evidence to condemn him to death; but they banished him under the penalty of death if he again entered Canada. The proofs of his innocence he sought in a series of letters between Lefebre and his coadjutor, which were in Lefebre's possession. He has sought them for long years and found them at last, and I pronounce him free from stain, and worthy to lead the soldiers of France to battle."

Cheer upon cheer followed.

"Your excellency," said De Lambert, "I entreat you to let me go. There is still work to be done, which only I can do. If you will permit me, I will take Captain Chastellar with me."

The permission was given, and the two officers so lately restored to their rank, rode as rapidly as they could through the crowd, passing directly under the windows of the house in which Coralie was confined. As they passed they heard a woman's scream, a pistol shot, and the sound of heavy blows.

"Her voice," cried Chastellar. "Oh, God, what does it mean?"

The door opened as they rushed in, and, dashing up the stairway, they came to the door of the upper room. Throwing it open they rushed in, and came suddenly upon a ghastly scene. The floor was stained with blood, and in the center, in a ghastly heap, lay the dead form of Lefebre, his skull crushed like an egg-shell. Half-reclining on the floor, at a little distance, lay Abah, endeavoring to stanch the blood which flowed from a wound in his breast, and Coralie stood apart, half-fainting, looking with dilating eyes at the fearful sight. Recognizing Chastellar, she threw herself into his arms with a glad cry.

"You are not hurt," he said, clasping her to his heart. "Thank God for that."

"Give her to me," cried De Lambert, eagerly. "My child, look at me. After many years I have come back to you. I am your father, Coralie."

She looked at him in mute astonishment.

"My father!"

"Yes, yes; your mother, driven to her death by yonder dead villain, is in her grave. You have seen her picture, and you know something of her face, but you can not know her heart."

In an instant she was in his arms, and he held her in a fervent clasp, close to his beating heart. A sort of gasping sigh called their attention, and they saw that Abah had crawled nearer, and was trying to clasp the knees of De Lambert.

"Oh, heaven," he cried, "my faithful servant, have I only come in time to see you die?"

He raised himself with an effort, and pointed exultantly at the dead form of Lefebre and then at his own breast. Then his hand moved rapidly, as if he asked a question.

"Yes, Abah," said Aubrey; "this is my daughter. But let me look at your wound."

The Moor waved him aside impatiently, and taking a fold of Coralie's robe, pressed it to his lips. Then, grasping his master's hand tightly in his own, he pressed it to his lips and fell back, dead!

"Faithful unto death," said De Lambert. "Let us leave this place, my daughter; it is too terrible a sight for you. In good time you shall understand how it was I did not sooner claim you. We will go, and together plan out a new and happier life."

"Have you ever thought of the boy to whom you promised to be faithful when Lavalle adopted you, Coralie?" whispered Louis, as they went out together.

"Often; I fear he is dead," said the girl, softly. "Poor fellow, he loved me."

"No, Coralie; he is not dead, but lives and loves you still. Louis Chastellar will not forget what *he* promised the little maid, so long ago."

"Are you he?" cried the girl, in astonishment. "Surprises will never end. But oh, that good old man, the Recluse. He was murdered by that coward, Neville, and will never live to witness our happiness."

A strange smile passed over the face of Chastellar, but he said nothing. They went to Lavalle's house, and De Lambert placed before the old man the box which he had thrown aside as empty. Touching a spring, a folded paper was revealed which contained these words:

"At the intercession of my captain, who has been kind to me, I consent to accept and rear as my own the child whom he has brought to me. Her true name is Coralie De Lambert, and her parents are dead. Her father was the celebrated Col-
on'l De Lambert who was tried for conspiracy and banished from the colony. Her mother died two years ago of a brain fever, brought on by her husband's misfortunes. I agree to keep this child's name a secret while I live, for the love of one who has been kind to me. JACQUES CRILLON."

"The picture is her mother's, and was suspended by this small gold chain to the child's neck. I may have done wrong in concealing her name and lineage so long, and if so, may the saints pardon me."

"And now, to explain some things which have been mysteries up to this time, Coralie. You have been saddened for the fate of the Recluse of Mont Royale, because you thought him foully murdered. He lives and you shall see him."

He rose and left the room, and, shortly after, the thump of a staff was heard, the door opened and the Recluse stood be-

fore them! Coralie started up with a glad cry, and sprung to meet him, when the white beard and cloak fell off, and they saw—Aubrey De Lambert!

“ You the Recluse,” cried Coralie. “ Is it possible !”

“ I and no other. In this disguise my plans have been perfected and have succeeded at length. You saw the weapon of that dead villain shiver on my breast. That was because it struck a vest of Milan steel of the finest temper, which no sword could pierce. The same turned aside the bullet which Sergeant Darnay aimed at it, and it enabled me to dare many dangers which looked wonderful in the eyes of men. But, my days of suffering are over, my dear daughter. Oh, that your mother could have lived to this hour !”

“ But, I saw Neville hurl the stone upon your head, and you fell into the chasm,” gasped Coralie.

“ Another delusion. The figure was not mine, but a stuffed figure, wearing my clothing, and purposely placed there to tempt Neville. He fell into the trap as you saw, and thinks to this day that I have been slain by his hand.”

Walter Neville hanged himself in prison, and Le Sabreur was deprived of his commission and returned to France, where he perished shortly after, in a duel which he had provoked. Antoine fled to the English colonies, not daring to meet the indignation of Montcalm. Aubrey De Lambert, gladly gave his daughter in marriage to the brave young soldier, Chastellar, and they led happy and blameless lives. Both the men who had regained their ancient honors fought by Montcalm’s side through all his wars, and were both with him when he died upon the blood-stained battle-field on the Plains of Abraham.

The story of Abah was a sad one. Years before, when Lefebre was a subaltern in Algiers, he had surprised a camp of Moors of which Abah was chief. The women and children were put to the sword, and Abah fell under a terrible saber cut from the hand of Lefebre. It was a useless butchery, and when the Moor came to himself he lay in a pool of his own blood, surrounded by the lifeless bodies of those he had loved. He registered a vow never to cease from following Lefebre until he was dead. In what manner he came to

take service with De Lambert need not be told, but it was for the love of his servant that Lefebre had been suffered to live so long. When the time came, the dead Moors in that bloody camp were amply avenged.

THE END.

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